

# UNDER THE DAWN.

GEORGE BARLOW.

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UNDER THE DAWN.

"The highest condition of art is when it interrogates the thought of the epoch in the nation and in humanity. . . . The thought of the epoch in humanity—whatever appearances may say to the contrary—is a religious transformation."  
—MAZZINI, *Preface to Critical and Literary Works*.

"In a soft-complexioned sky,  
Fleeting rose and kindling grey,  
Have you seen Aurora fly,  
At the break of day?"—ROSSETTI.

# UNDER THE DAWN

BY

GEORGE BARLOW,

AUTHOR OF "POEMS AND SONNETS," AND "A LIFE'S LOVE."



London :  
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY.

1875.  
H A



## *DEDICATION.*

I LEAVE the starry night behind,  
And stand upon the gleaming hills  
Of sunrise, and the future thrills  
My spirit,—which was dead and blind  
With frost and apathy that kills,  
And hopelessness ; I mark mankind  
Proceeding towards a kinglier mind.

As one before me sang of stars,  
And twilight, and the early day,  
And hope the bigots' sword-hilt mars,  
So would I, further on Time's way,  
Emerging from the tender grey  
Of early morning, and the scars  
Of early battle, mark the bars

Of happy crimson in the East—  
Religions of the world do wane  
Like lights upon a window-pane  
When the rich sacramental feast  
Is over, and the priestly train  
Has vanished ; when their songs have ceased,  
And sober daylight has increased.

Religions of the world do wane—  
But yet the hope of man is high,  
And underneath the crimson sky  
Of morning, he awakes a strain  
The sweeter in that dawn is nigh,  
Bringing the close of many a pain,  
And many a golden joy to gain.

As summer slides from flower to flower,  
From gracious lily unto rose,  
From violet unto fervent bower  
Of honeysuckle at the close  
Of summer, when the winds repose,  
And all is silent for an hour,  
Till autumn wakes with breezy power ;—

As summer slips from bloom to bloom,  
And spring from sweet bird's song to song,  
And winter's ice-encircled tomb  
Is but the circlet of a throng  
Of voices that shall shout ere long,  
And blossoms that shall burst the gloom,  
Eager spring's brilliance to resume ;—

So man's hope changes ; but the same  
Rich life in other forms doth blow,  
As many buds do rend the snow  
With various shafts of coloured flame,  
But each some flowery hope doth show,  
And some resplendent, scented aim—  
In such a guise religion came

Upon the earth ; the rose of Greece  
Is over, and the lily pure  
Of Christendom shall not endure,  
But this too hath a time to cease—  
A fragrant burial to secure,  
A rapt and exquisite release,  
The ages' sempiternal peace !

The peace of past religions waits  
For Christianity as well,  
Behold, a new flower at the gates,  
A fresh truth to proclaim and tell ;  
Behold, with tears the red rose fell  
That bloomed above the Grecian States ;  
The lily falls : thro' loves and hates,

And troubles outward and within,  
We pass to meet the future—we,  
On whom the shadow dark has been  
Of faiths we had not strength to flee :  
Our white rose, of a certainty,  
To those fallen blossoms next of kin,  
The future for her own shall win.

The intense spirit of Greece is ours,  
And all the Hebrew, pure desire ;  
Our sons ~~with~~ Hebrew holy fire,  
Our maids with fragrant passion-flowers,  
We crown—our poets bear a lyre  
That sings a song of various hours ;  
Their hands are sweet from varied bowers.

The intense heart of Greece unites,  
In this the morning of the world,  
With aspirations first unfurled  
On austere Sinaitic heights  
When awful wreaths of mist were whirled  
About the brow of Moses : flights  
Of fancy, raptures, pains, delights,

Of all the ages, sweep their stores  
Into the future's ample arms,  
Strange shells from Asiatic shores,  
Greek sculpture, Scandinavian charms,  
All, all, we gather ; nought alarms  
Our eager venture ; at our doors  
The past her various treasure pours.

And these songs of the morning I  
Would dedicate, my sweet, to thee,  
Though thou didst, like a woman, fly  
The future's cold austerity,  
Eager to test the crowns that be  
Behind, desiring to ally  
Thy spirit to the starlit sky.

Thou hadst not strength to search the cold  
And unpropitious future seas ;  
Yea, thou didst dread the early breeze  
Of morning, and thy lips were bold  
Among the pleasaunces of trees  
Behind, and palaces of gold  
Behind, and temples tall and old.

The future thou didst quite despise ;  
It turns a deaf ear unto thee  
Therefore ; thou shalt not, surely, see  
With mortal, wonder-smitten eyes  
The vision of the morn that we  
With rapt desire and rich surmise  
Mark in the sunlight-stricken skies.

Rest in the mountains far behind,  
Among the temples that shall fall,  
While we partake the lovely wind  
Of morning, that doth soothe us all ;  
Yet unto thee my songs shall crawl  
As humble worshippers, and find,  
It may be, some reception kind.

It may be that thyself shalt own,  
When age doth bring a clearer view  
Of truth, that Love's most dainty tone  
Was in the singer of the new,  
When, his harp's restless cordage thro'  
The keen-edged wind of morn was blown,  
And fresh sounds and fresh sights were shown.

Few women have the strength to seek  
The truth thro' trouble unto death ;  
But soft winds woo their fragrant breath,  
And roses suit their rose-soft cheek,  
And each word that the soft mouth saith,  
A thousand lovers mark ; they speak  
No truths from austere mountain-peak.

The softest gardens are their own,  
The softest brilliance of a lawn  
In summer, not the cold grey dawn  
And ocean's distant, half-heard tone,  
When faint explorers' feet are drawn  
Towards some far distant waste unknown,  
And winds are from that desert blown

Towards their approach ; to thee I leave  
The so-called happiness of life,  
And these songs, sung where warriors grieve  
And women mix not in their strife,  
I send from struggling poet's fife  
Towards that glad garden thou didst weave  
For thine own pleasure—I achieve

No great things ; I have lost my song,  
For, Alice, I have failed of thee,  
And, therefore, I have lost the throng  
Of fancies that I used to see  
Around, within, beside of me,  
And growing sadness does me wrong,  
Tho' once for thee my lyre was strong.

But what I can do, this I do,  
And what I can say, this I sing,  
And what I may weave, that I bring ;—  
The morning is in pleasant view,  
And to that bright dawn's skirts I cling,  
Hating the past, but with a true  
Love, loving the delicious new.

As one before me sang of clouds,  
And daybreak, and the hopeless hope  
That in the creed he chanteth shrouds  
Its form, so would I seek to ope  
The gateways of a hopeful hope,  
And unto thee, delicious Alice,  
I bring the outskirts of Time's palace.

*July 15, 1873.*



## *P R E F A C E.*

I HAVE been told that this book is only “an echo of ‘Songs before Sunrise.’” And, in regard to my sonnets already published, I have been constantly accused of imitating Mr. Rossetti. Having borne the latter charge and the more general statement of the former patiently for upwards of three years and a half, I think that the time has come to say a few words in my own defence.

First let me, on general grounds, protest against the habit which has grown upon the more superficial class of critics of late, of referring all new volumes of poetry to one of two schools—either to that of Swinburne or that of Rossetti. (It used to be Tennyson; but the critics have changed their note.) If an author writes a sonnet with a certain ring about it, and ventures to praise the beauty of a lady’s hair, he is straightway set down as a follower of Mr. Rossetti;—perhaps even complimented, as I have been, on succeeding in writing a line worthy

of his master. In the same way, if he quits the region of the sonnet, and writes passionate verses, venturing (deluded poet !) to suppose that such words as "foam," "flower," "sanguine," "bitter," "rose-red," "blood-red," "flame-coloured," "fire," "froth," "barren," "serpent," "kisses," "blossoms," "fruitless," "eyelids," &c., are the common property of English authors, he is straightly and violently apprised of his mistake by a petulant shriek from the assembled critics. When he succeeds, with difficulty, in separating the syllables of this impassioned shriek or wail, and arriving at something articulate, he finds that he has been unconsciously violating Mr. Swinburne's patent : that he is set down, and is for evermore to be branded as a Swinburnian. Now, surely it is time that the insufferable foolishness of this sort of thing should cease, and that critics should read a little further than "foam," before they stamp the book which is under their notice as Swinburnian—a little further than "hair," before they make up their minds that the author is a hopeless imitator of Rossetti. Golden tresses and brown gleamed upon the foreheads of women before Mr. Rossetti lived : and the sea foamed and raved, and lovers chose vehement words in which to express their passion, as long before the advent of Mr. Swinburne. A writer in the *Contemporary Review* of June, 1874, towards the close of a notice of Lord Lytton's "Fables in Song," said very justly :—"It is no more reasonable

to regard the influence of the sire's muse as prejudicial to the waxing fame of his son, as a poet, than to clack, after the manner of a small but exorbitant clique, over tricks of manner, metre, and language supposed to have been stolen from Tennyson or Swinburne, *as if a style could become copyright, or patent beauties were to be protected by pains and penalties.*\* A fair test would be to enquire whether so called plagiarisms are integral or casual and superficial. If only the latter, or if simply the result of a cultivated taste, assimilating delicacies within its reach and ken, it is well for poetry that there should continue to be 'free trade.'" The above is one proof among many that the abler and more discerning critics are beginning to revolt against the self-assertion of a critical "school," and that healthier times of clearer vision are coming. Would it be believed that I was once accused of borrowing from "Enoch Arden," because I called the sunset "scarlet"? This is the very *reductio ad absurdum* of the accusation of plagiarism. I should recommend poets who wish to meet the views of their critics to sing of black sunsets, and green lilies, and blue roses, and brown foam—that would, at any rate, be original. As sunsets are unfortunately addicted, in common with lilies and violets and roses and grass, to borrowing, with the most audacious plagiarism, the very

\* I have italicized the above passage, as it expresses so very happily the folly of the view which I am here endeavouring to combat.

tints and hues of those that have gone before, it is difficult to see how an accurate describer can avoid plagiarizing also.

So far for the general question. Next let me state that when my sonnets were written *I had never read Mr. Rossetti's work*. I once opened his book in the library of the Oxford Union Society, and quickly perceived a certain similarity between his verses and my own. This being the case, I followed my first impulse, and hurriedly closed the book—feeling, even then, a sorrowful foreboding of the tumultuous accusations of plagiarism, which would subsequently be hurled against me. But before I shut the book my eye fell upon a sonnet of Mr. Rossetti's concerning the Virgin Mary. The general drift of this sonnet I bore away in my mind, and on reaching home I wrote an answer to it, which was published in "Poems and Sonnets," part iii., p. 116. This is all the reading of Mr. Rossetti which I did for a long time. I was determined to be able to answer the objections which I even then foresaw by an honest statement of the fact that I had not read the verses of my alleged master; and, therefore, at the cost of some self-denial, I did not read Mr. Rossetti's book till the spring of this year. Thus the accusation of plagiarism in that direction, at any rate, falls to the ground. This matter must, of course, seem trivial enough to most people, and hardly worth adverting to at such length. Yet it is not a slight matter for a young poet, upon his

first attempt, to be branded, as I was, in a powerful paper like the *Spectator*, as a sedulous imitator of a man whose sonnets he had never read. And when I see the same process applied to poet after poet, as each rises with flushed face and trembling wings, to the great discouragement of honest artistic effort, and the serious vitiation and perversion of public taste (for it is considered enough, in regard to a new book, to pick up the critics' casual cry, and to say of so-and-so : "Oh, he is an imitator of Swinburne ; or an echo of Tennyson ; or a feeble copy of Rossetti !")—seeing this, I feel that the time has come for speaking out, and pleading for a nobler standard of artistic judgment and a loftier measure of insight among those whom my voice may reach.

Up to this point I have spoken principally of my sonnets and Mr. Rossetti. Let me fairly admit that I *have* been very largely influenced by Mr. Swinburne, though I believe my verse contains sufficient original elements to entitle it to be considered quite apart from his. But of this others must judge ; I may, however, be allowed to point out very briefly the cardinal differences between the point of view of "Songs before Sunrise" and that of "Under the Dawn." Mr. Swinburne's book is pantheistic : mine is theistic. While his passionate and omnipotent trumpet-voice gives most majestic poetic utterance to the speculations of Comte and the varied cries of struggling humanity, with constant

political reference to the coming triumphs of his ideal “immeasurable republic,” my humbler harp seeks to celebrate the triumphs of an approaching theistic creed, akin to that of Emerson, Theodore Parker, M. D. Conway, F. W. Newman, F. P. Cobbe, W. R. Greg, and Mazzini. The distinction is most clear; “Under the Dawn” is written from what is assumed to be (this is not the place for discussing how far my point of view is the true one) a position beyond that of the author of “Songs before Sunrise :”—further in advance, clearer, brighter, nearer the dawn. The dawn has not yet fully gleamed upon either of us; but theism surely is the nearer to its crimson beauty. Nothing is more noticeable in “Songs before Sunrise” than the absence of the tender personal element for which all forms and phases of the Christian Creed make such ample provision. This element, with all that it implies of hope and love and triumph, the singer, vast as is his genius, has not fully absorbed. Therefore, as an exponent of the religion of the future, his book is incomplete; for much that Christianity bought with dearest blood and preserved by perpetual sacrifice, is pitilessly omitted. Indeed, there runs through many of Mr. Swinburne’s poems a sort of passionate contempt for the yearnings and hopes of the individual man; the poetic repetition of many of the anti-personal ideas of Comte. Thus:—

“—Pass on then and pass by us and let us be,  
For what light think ye after life to see?

And if the world fare better will ye know ?

And if man triumph who shall seek you and say ?

—Enough of light is this for one life's span,  
That all men born are mortal, but not man :

And we men bring death lives by night to sow,

That man may reap and eat and live by day.”

—*The Pilgrims.*

“ I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,

As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line ;

But thou from dawn to sunsetting shalt cherish

The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine.”

—*Mater Triumphalis.*

“ Fool, wilt thou live for ever ? Though thou care

With all thine heart for life to keep it fast,

Shall not thine hand forego it at the last ?

Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the hair

Sleeping, or when thou knowest not, or wouldest fly ;

And as men died much mightier shalt thou die.”

—*Tiresias.*

It is this personal element, wanting in “ Songs before Sunrise,” largely present in Christianity and in the theistic writings of Parker and Mazzini, which I have endeavoured to supply ; or rather to make a movement towards supplying. Mr. Conway, in his very remarkable “ Earthward Pilgrimage\*,” says :—“ What will be the circle wide enough to enclose the excommunicated Nineteenth Century ? We have had a Church of Priestly authority, a Church of Biblical authority, a Church of Christ ; there is nothing left for us but a Church of God.

\* Pp. 312, 313.

In that common term of all religions, which priests have preserved in their superstitions only as a seed is kept through ages in the shroud of a mummy, we may behold the germ of the next religion of mankind. . . . . Simple theism has but few churches now ; it is a newly discovered and as yet unexplored continent ; but so was America a little while ago. They who, like Plymouth Pilgrims, have settled in the winter time on its rocky verge know little as yet of its prairies, savannahs, and Eldorados ; but they already see that it is to be the next great home of human hearts and thoughts.”

It is this all-embracing, all-renovating theism which I have tried to sing. Much has been done for it in prose ; little, as yet, in song. As my predecessor said of Liberty, made one, in his vision, with the marvellous breasts and face of his perfect Republic, so I say of the supreme theism which shines upon the vision of a few,—

“ Birds shall wake with thee voiced and feathered fairer,  
To see in summer what I see in spring ;  
I have eyes and heart to endure thee, O thunder-bearer,  
And they shall be who shall have tongues to sing.”

GEORGE BARLOW.

SWEETBRIARS, BLACKHEATH,

*November, 1874.*

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## UNDER THE DAWN.

### A HYMN OF LOVE.

Love sprang from the clean fair furrows, and clove the  
abysses of foam,  
Where the wallowing sword-fish burrows, the mermaid's  
inviolate home,  
And over the snow-capped mountains, remote inacces-  
sible ways,  
By the earliest springs of the fountains, sounds softly the  
psalm of her praise,  
And she shines in the gleams of morning, and falls in  
the feet of the dew,  
And crimson her banner of warning floats, sweetly  
dividing the blue,  
And maidens are mute, and receive her with blushes, and  
laughter, and sighs,  
If a man be a coward and leave her, he sickens and  
straightway dies,

By her power all women are stately, and she shapes the  
advance of their feet,  
As a goddess she walketh sedately, and her presence is  
goodly to meet,  
And some have been happy and found her in the quiet  
repose of their homes,  
And chained, and encircled, and bound her; from others  
she flutters and roams  
In advance as a beacon for ever, as a token the pulse of  
her feet,  
And her girdle she looseneth never, though a man be a  
lover and sweet,  
But she dances, for laughter is pleasant, in advance of  
him, glitters away,  
And no sooner his passion is present than he finds she  
was only in play;  
So she shines and retreats and advances, and flatters and  
slays and consumes,  
And her home is a palace of dances, and her mansion a  
garden of tombs.

But her feet are as ivory shining like stars through the  
lanes of the night,  
And her hair she is tenderly twining, and her eyes are as  
beacons and bright,

So she lures the pale ships to destruction, and shatters  
them, fierce, on the rocks  
Where the waves in recoil and refluxion tear their sides  
in exuberant shocks,  
As the sharks and the sword-fish devour them, and the  
fangs of the herds of the sea,  
And the waves overburden and scour them, and the  
winds are unloosened and free,  
When the long grey rollers and solemn come thundering  
in from the south,  
Like a giant impassable column, each curling a leonine  
mouth,  
And a mane that blusters and brightens, and shaking  
unsearchable hands,  
Till it bursts and disperses and whitens the shingle, and  
furrows the sands ;  
But she smiles, doth the goddess, and winneth a wreath  
for each wayfarer slain,  
For by blood she resumes and beginneth each epoch and  
year of her reign,  
Swift changing our prayers into cursing, our shouts into  
shrieking and groans,  
While her hands, being subtle, are nursing broad bubbles  
that break into moans,  
For from every wave she can cull them, the bubbles that  
break into tears,

And so bruise, deaden, and dull them, these windy and petulant years,  
And first give a man, for a season, red roses and kisses and hope,  
And laurels and hours of reason and room for desires, and scope  
For love and for work and for action, and labour of months and of years,  
With woman's caress for distraction, and her breast when the eventide nears,  
And her face to encourage and strengthen, and her hands to make certain and sure,  
And her bosom to broaden and lengthen the deeds of a man that endure,  
And her kisses to cover and move him, and her lips to make tender and white,  
And her body to perfect and prove him through the hours and moods of the night,  
And her swift approbation to keep him in the struggling crest of the van  
And to plunge and encircle and steep him in the courage befitting a man,  
And her tender reproach to remind him of feet treading backward and frail,  
To strengthen and compass and bind him in a suit of impassable mail,

To crown and to cherish and plume him with an eagle's  
intemperate crest,  
And to scourge and to pierce and consume him if he fails  
of the absolute best,  
To garb him each day for the battle, and to nerve him  
for iron and shocks,  
When the foemen like cowardly cattle are smitten by  
gauntleted knocks,  
When the ranks of the slain are divided, and the spears  
being bloody are sure,  
And the beaten are bruised and derided, and only the  
giants endure,  
When the wings of the scavengers glisten as the swords  
that were lusty by day,  
And the nightbirds gather and listen, and the vultures  
collect and obey  
The ravenous instinct of tearing, consuming, and gorging  
the slain,  
Beaks whetted, and talons preparing for a bloody and  
obstinate reign.

For this she can strengthen a hero—a woman—by love of  
her soul,  
Though he be but a coward, a Nero, *she* can conquer,  
abate, and control,

And mould, and environ, and fashion, and make him as  
iron or steel,  
As a sword of invincible passion, as a dauntless and iron-  
shod heel,  
As a trumpet to sound and be urgent, as a banner to  
wave and be sweet,  
As a foam-crested breaker resurgent, with the noise of a  
storm in his feet,  
As a long cloud purple and massive, and pregnant with  
boisterous rain,  
Or a knight, mailed, silent, and passive, who wastes not  
a sinew in vain.

All this can a woman, by simple and soft means, further  
and do,  
Though she knows not the force in her dimple, and the  
magic retained in her shoe,  
And her power for truth and redemption, for peace and  
for heaven and rest,  
And the wonderful calm and exemption from trouble we  
find in her breast.  
But Love, as I say, having given a woman and roses and  
songs,  
Is shortly ashamed, and has striven by yeasty impetuous  
wrongs

To turn her and frighten and shame her, and melt sweet  
passion to scorn,  
For who shall question or blame her, when Love's wrath  
rose and was born,  
With a storm and a rustle and shaking of the black fierce  
plumes of her wings,  
Attended by clamour and quaking of neighbouring terri-  
fied things ?  
Yea, who shall blame her or seek her of those that have  
sight and are 'ware  
That the ages have groaned to bespeak her, but have  
found but the wind of her hair ?  
For she flies in advance of the nations, and her breath is  
the breath of a rose,  
But her bosom provides tribulations, and her feet scatter  
hailstones and snows,  
And she flings from her plumes being golden, and bright,  
and as sweet as the sun,  
Many sorrows that slay and wax olden, Life's race being  
lately begun,  
And she smiles, and her eyes are so gracious, and she  
turns as a maiden who fears  
Lest the woods and the path be too spacious, and halts  
till her follower nears,  
Then glideth in front—but she lingers to gather a lily, or  
pluck

Some loitering rose with her fingers, or a grass-stalk  
dainty to suck,  
That he may have time, and a reason to follow her close,  
and be found  
At some soft and convenient season beseeching her grace  
from the ground.

So Love and her glances are cunning, and her eyes are  
not slow to be turned,  
But her feet are as swift at the running as her lovers are  
sure to be spurned,  
To be hurled into sorrow and distance, and grievous and  
snow-coloured ways,  
By the certain recoil and resistance of her springy and  
rose-hung sprays,  
When a man takes heart and endeavours to pull one down  
to his face,  
Or covets a rose, and he severs the branch—has mistaken  
the place !  
For, lofty as ever, rebounding, the rose-branch leaps and  
is strong,  
And pink laughs tinkle, resounding from the sisterly  
boisterous throng !  
He has only a twig for a booty, and the rose blushes  
redder on high,

With softer and languider beauty, and a softer more  
amorous sigh ;  
So he leaps, and is baffled, and flutters to the ground with  
a sting in his feet,  
And curses, and leaves her, and mutters, but the rose  
abides gracious and sweet.

So is Love ; and her voice on the mountains was a  
treacherous boon from the first,  
And salt are the springs of her fountains, promoting per-  
petual thirst,  
And the palms of her bounty are bitter, and she gives  
with a thorn in her hands ;  
And she slays with a smile and a twitter—then binds up  
the wandering bands  
Of sweet brown hair, and increases the grace and the  
speed of her feet,  
She binds but she never releases, yet the bands of her  
serfdom are sweet,  
And she laughs, like a girl at a lover, and she calls him a  
fool for his pains,  
And he knows it, but cannot discover a sweeter that  
sways him and reigns :  
For the face of a girl, being cruel, is nathless sweet to a  
man,

And he laughs to pile fodder and fuel for her greed with  
the force that he can,  
And he chooseth to wince and be broken, and elects to  
be smitten and bruised,  
And desires a blood-stained token—to be pierced and  
deceived and abused,  
And hardly treated, and trodden by the delicate soles of  
her feet  
Which are daintily covered and shodden in sandals silver  
and sweet,  
And twined as a ribbon around her, a gracious encircling  
cord,  
That hath seized and hath bitten and bound her, though  
'tis nathless cursed and abhorred ;  
For the biters are sometimes bitten, and a snake being  
crushed will turn,  
And the smiters are now and then smitten, and at seasons  
the furnacers burn,  
And the seagulls startle and vanish, being dragged under  
waves by a fish,  
And the eels are rebellious and banish the cooks and  
devour the dish.

So a girl has been known to be broken by the blows and  
the hammers of Love,

Grow pale, and be meek for a token, and cease to be  
seated above  
The back of the man she had corded in an iron and  
perilous chain,  
Which hath snapped, and recoiled, and rewarded its  
donor with exquisite pain.

But Love laughs, standing in heaven, and seeing the tears  
and the sighs,  
And the working of manifold leaven, and the closing of  
manifold eyes,  
And the ending of months of embraces, and beginnings  
of eras of sobs,  
Thistles sown in the flowery places, and a thorn that in-  
creases and robs  
The pale honeymoon of its pleasure—for now he is  
cruel, and cold,  
And she is alone, and has leisure, and shortly they both  
will be old ;  
And the roses are dry and are faded, and the scent of the  
lilies is gone,  
And the bride's cheeks weary and jaded, and the bride-  
clothes scattered and wan,  
And the violets pale and a scandal to keep in the leaves  
of a book,

And kisses are scanty to handle, smiles rare and a labour  
to hook,  
And the bride, disenthroned, discontented, divorced and  
amazed and in tears,  
Sees with horror the newly-invented, matrimonial, discon-  
solate years.

But Love, as for Love, in the splendour and petulant  
pulse of her feet  
On the waves that surround her, and render a tuneful  
homage and sweet,  
As for Love, with her white hands holden on the wings  
and the arms of the airs,  
She shall not wax feeble nor olden ; her beauty increases  
and bears  
The future and past and the present, and huddles them  
close to her breast,  
And to each for a season 'tis pleasant, and to each in the  
end 'tis a jest ;  
For she slays and disthrones and displaces ; no heaven  
is hers, being sweet  
With the smiles of immaculate faces and the throbs of  
immaculate feet,  
But a land of destruction and iron, and spear-points  
clustered and keen,

And of wastes that hyænas environ, and tigers, and wolf-cubs unclean,—  
And of loves that are girdled with sorrow, and joys that are crowned with a curse,  
And kisses that vanish to-morrow, and leave us in trouble, and worse  
Than if she had never uplifted our soul in the palms of her hands,  
And made us as angels, and gifted with sacred unspeakable lands  
Of delight, and of dreams, and of stories, and perfect and passionless sleep,  
And molten and musical glories—having left us to stammer and weep,  
Having left us to groan and be heavy through nights over-bitter and long,  
With never a tune, but a bevy of storm-claps instead of a song,  
And thunder and terror and anguish for her beauty by night and by day,  
That our souls may be straitened and languish, as our hands have forgotten to pray,  
That the faces we see may be grievous, and our friends as a company clad  
With intent to betray and deceive us, and our rising and sitting be sad,

That the mornings no more may be gracious in summer,  
nor grasses be sweet,  
Nor paths in the woodlands capacious, and fern-fronds  
cool to our feet,  
And the sense of the pastures pleasant, and the touch of  
the plumes of the morn,  
And the voice of a day being present, and at even the  
sound of the horn  
That bids man rest and be quiet in his house in the  
arms of a wife,  
Leaving terror and sins and the riot of passions for fra-  
granter life,  
And a calmer more beautiful manner of love and desire  
and strength,  
And a softer more exquisite banner, and kisses of shape-  
lier length,  
Enduring, and sweet, and returning in seemly and fruit-  
ful rain,  
Not foaming and biting and burning with teeth that take  
pleasure in pain.  
For, when sin's rapture is over, comes sacred silence of  
thought,  
And conscience burns to uncover the pit towards which  
we are brought,  
By music, perhaps, or a flower, or some kind voice of a  
friend,

Restoring our innate power, but bringing self to an end,  
That the soul may be fit for the healing, and tender and dexterous hand  
Of a woman, her power revealing, and her pity, in choosing to stand  
As redeemer and goddess and saviour, with a calm in the soles of her feet,  
And a heaven in modest behaviour, and eyes not a snake's eyes but sweet  
And gentle, and green for a season, till they soften and shade into brown,  
For the simple and generous reason, that pity has melted them down,  
Their colour improving, refining, and blending, and mixing, till each  
As the glance of a song-bird is shining, and gracious as such is her speech,  
For she tarries and steps and advances, as a light flaming into the gloom,  
And her feet have a murmur of dances, and her hands are as swords to consume  
The horror and wrath and uncleanness, and madness and craze in the eyes,  
For a change introducing sereness, and valour and duty for lies,

And tortuous coils and exactions, and trumpery pitiful ways,  
And selfish incessant distractions of souls that were lost in a maze  
Of foul thoughts, solitude, error, remorse, suicidal despair,  
And agonized thunder-struck terror, and hell's hot inordinate air;  
But now she believes him, and moves him, and speaks to him gently, and tries  
How a woman can comfort, and proves him by the lamp and the love in her eyes,  
Having sought him, and finally found him, she will bind him in rose-spun bands,  
For her grace and her pity has crowned him, and her tender and maidenly hands  
Shall annul and disperse and uncover the heads and the crowns of the past,  
For is he not hers and a lover, and has she not won him at last?

There are many divisions, and phases, and sides and solutions of Love  
Who sits as a woman that grazes, with one arm lifted above

Her beautiful clear-veined shoulders, the stones on the heavenly floor,  
But her foot reaches down to the boulders that cover hell's rock-strewn shore ;  
Like a maiden who sits by a river, and one hand loosens her hair,  
But her feet are playful, and shiver, and shine, and are lissom and fair  
In the cool weed-haunted waters—for her face is as heaven, but her feet  
Tarry where foul river-fog slaughters ; but her hands and her tresses are sweet.  
So is Love that encloses and handles both foul and celestial things,  
Having harlequin separate sandals, and diverse unsimilar rings  
On her dainty bediamonded fingers, and flowers and leaves in her hair,  
Some possessed by an odour that lingers, like dreams of a bride, on the air  
So gently and softly and sweetly, one cannot but hold and be sure  
That a flower encircled so meetly *must* be gracious and wholesome and pure.  
But blossoms there are which are loaded with a heavy and obstinate scent,

Whose bloom, being bruised and corroded, an atmosphere evil hath lent,  
Black, sad with cold loss and repentance, and a sense of departure and tears,  
And an iron inflexible sentence of lonely and pitiless years;  
For he shall not renew nor discover the ancient ineffable days,  
When a maid by the side of a lover stepped, softly dividing the sprays,  
And the tangles, and woodland arches, and the ferns with the grace of her feet,  
Those delicate mutual marches, divine, and a memory sweet  
In abysses of waste recollection, by the founts and the birth-place of tears,  
And the grey rocks piled in connection with glaciers frozen of fears,  
And rain, and the waters of sorrow, having snows as a shadow above,  
With barely a gentian to borrow the hues and the savour of love.

Now Time, and its curse, matters little, and visions hasty and few

Impede not a jot nor a tittle man's love, so it only be  
true;  
For I see that the passion of Dante rose clear, and its  
colour was born,  
From the short condescension and scanty of years inter-  
cepted and torn,  
By a grievous death and a bitter, and a new grim horror,  
in twain,  
Yet a purer and sweeter and fitter the ages have searched  
for in vain,  
A calmer and clearer and stronger, more golden and  
great in the end,  
For God has no cunning a longer more delicate lover to  
send,  
Whose feet are as soft as embraces, and his voice as the  
strings of a lyre,  
And his visions as heavenly faces, and his mantle as  
heavenly fire  
Streaming over and through him and round him, till he  
gleams as the globe of the sun,  
Which has quitted its altar, and bound him in rays that  
encircle and run  
Round the wonderful forehead, creative, and shadowed  
by calm of the bays,  
And the deep dark eyes, contemplative, as a prophet's  
unsearchable gaze,

As a prophet's, fixed, firm, and, in season and out of it,  
piercing the sky  
Like an eagle's, for none other reason than this—'tis  
their nature to fly,  
And to leap, and exult in the regions where never a bird  
else flew,  
But *their* plumes, by battalions and legions, have cloven  
and smitten the blue,  
By companies, squadrons, surmounting the azure im-  
pregnable airs,  
Old triumphs and goodly recounting to young irresistible  
pairs  
Of soft-plumed eaglets aspiring to mount to the feet of  
the sun,  
Wings failing them not, neither tiring, till the red long  
journey is done.

Although Love seems to be cruel, she shall in the end  
be sweet,  
It lasts not for ever, this duel 'twixt Love and our vehe-  
ment heat,  
For, if a man be faithful, he finds, when he shall have  
died,  
Love's bosom soft, not wrathful, and her heart as the  
heart of a bride—

As the heart of a bride being gracious when night and its wonderment nears,  
And the halls of love's palace are spacious, and she mingles, with delicate fears,  
Sweet kisses and sobs—retrograding, advancing, and doubtful of heart,  
Desires alternate invading each maidenly dubitant part ;  
For passion and eagerness kindle the red, sweet gleams in her face,  
But they sink and diminish and dwindle, for modesty yielding a place,  
And the old coy terror and girlish, when he steps in his fortitude near,  
For he seems as a wronger and churlish, and her heart beats swift and in fear,  
Like the beautiful innocent panting of a sweet bird held in the hand,  
While the boy who has seized her is ranting, and rude, and his comrades stand  
In a circle to praise his achievement, and the new-found delicate bird,  
For they share not her sobs and bereavement, nor the wailing of parents heard,  
Who circle, with bitter intoning, round their careless unscrupulous heads,

And shrieking, and calling, and moaning—but the boys  
stride home to their beds.

And lo ! in the cool of the hours of even the nestling  
fails,

And is one with all dead, sweet flowers, and her wings  
are as mute as the veils

That folded and shrouded and shielded the lilywhite form  
of Elaine

When her heart being broken had yielded to Lancelot's  
pitiless reign.

So the maiden is sweet and uncertain, and her diverse  
unsearchable moods

Spread a soft unaccountable curtain across her—she  
brightens, and broods,

And sobs, and will smile, and will languish, and her  
beauty is urgent and beams,

Next she pines as a prisoner in anguish, and her bosom  
is pregnant, and teems

With sighs and with yearnings unuttered, unspoken and  
wonderful things

Half coyly and timidly muttered—next the songbird  
recovers and sings

With soft and expedient passion, and a tuneful but  
tremulous voice,

In so tender and loving a fashion that he cannot but  
weep and rejoice

That at last he has softened and brought her to a sense  
of his presence and calm,  
And a sense of the love that has sought her with firm  
irresistible palm  
Through oceans and valleys and trouble, and over the  
mountains and hills,  
Through sorrows that served to redouble his passion,  
and iron-hewn ills  
His sword has been potent to shatter, and has cloven  
their foreheads in twain,  
But—she loves him, and what does it matter, that sound  
of invisible pain,  
Of long-past chains, and the rattle of previous shackles  
and bands,  
And the gleams of that hard-fought battle, and the signs  
of importunate lands  
Long traversed and left and forgotten when roses and  
beauty are near,  
Like the lilies whose roots lying rotten recollect but the  
dawn of the year.  
But still she needs gentle invasion, for she knows not  
what Heaven is like,  
And a delicate seemly persuasion, till her colours droop  
softly and strike,  
Like the drooping attire of a lily shone hotly upon by  
the sun,

In some region unshady and hilly, where arbours and groves there are none,  
But rocks, and the valleys, and voiceless, tossed floods of grey boulders and stones—  
So the lily is faded, and choiceless, and robbed of her silvery tones,  
The sweet low sounds that are ready by the banks and the lips of a stream,  
When white leaves laugh in an eddy as white hands wave in a dream.  
But to-morrow she knows, and her beauty is tenderer, far more soft,  
Being kissed and imprisoned for booty, for a prize, not seldom but oft,  
In his hands that are gentle and pressing, and his lips that are tuneful and sure,  
And his arms being wide and caressing, and his body a garden, and pure,  
And filled with the fruits of desire, and of sacred and soundless dreams,  
When the nights are an ocean of fire, and the mornings a mantle of beams,  
Flung wild from the flights of the swallows next the circles and rims of the sun,  
Those fathomless untold hollows no feet of a sinner have won;

For at morning comes swift revelation to a mortal embracing a bride,  
For a season as one of the nation of angels, and hurled in the tide  
Of gold-winged creatures ascending for ever the ivory stairs,  
Their plumes intermingling and blending with the feathers and feet of the airs  
That laugh, intercircle, and clamour, like countless exuberant herds  
Whom the sun's risen crown doth enamour, or frolicsome thousands of birds  
Flying upward, and striking and flapping the flushed red face of the morn,  
Till her eyes are unclosed by the clapping of pinions, and straightway is born  
A young child naked and solemn, the untried dawn of a day,  
With body yet smooth as a column, and feet unenfeebled, and grey  
With the dews that caress, and surround him, and are soft, and as pearls in his hair,  
Having smitten and blinded and bound him in volumes of vehement air—  
As a man who with urgent endeavour, and laughter, and lips that are sweet,

Pelts a woman with flowers, and never gives over till  
down to her feet  
She shines as a bower of roses, and violets, and cowslips,  
and may,  
Till her pouting rejoinder discloses that she knows he  
was only in play,  
And her face is so beautiful, smiling through the leaves  
and the various hues,  
That his hands are already re-piling new flower-heaps  
whence he may choose.

But Love and the moods of a maiden are endless, and  
woe to the man  
Whose mind, over-burthened and laden, sings loudly and  
strong in the van  
Of beauty and laughter and kisses, and the diverse shades  
of her eyes,  
For, in that he numbered her blisses and told them, she  
shuns him and flies,  
Runs gaily, and wildly, and madly, being woman and  
frail and perverse,  
Into arms that will cover her sadly, and give her no folly  
to nurse,  
Being grave, and of common-hewn fashions, not ringed as  
with flowers and songs,

And girdled with voluble passions, and fancies in turbulent throngs,  
That leap and amaze and surround her, till her loveliness falls burnt blind  
With the blossoms with which they had crowned her, and seeks for a prudenter mind,  
More calm, robed also sedately, with a quieter tone in his feet,  
And an elderly presence and stately, and an ancient and orderly beat  
Of passions in order, and under supreme and a quiet control,  
Not raging and rending in sunder the storm-tossed sides of the soul,  
But holding her gently, and seeing *some* beauty, no doubt, in her eyes,  
Then turning, and sleeping, and fleeing her presence, for, friends, *he is wise!*—  
“ And a man is a fool to be taken and seized by a woman by storm,  
The wings of his fortitude shaken, and his brain over-eager and warm  
With incessant, intemperate craving, and his heart overburthened and mad  
With mute unavoidable raving, and his days garbed grimly and sad,

And his nights as funereal mansions, in trappings engendered of sighs,  
And his dreams as delirious expansions of day's storms, troubles, and lies.  
A man needs change, and distraction, and not to be caged with a wife,  
And sundered from vehement action, and the great undertakings of life ;  
For a woman is small to fill only the brain and the heart of a man,  
Being large, left empty and lonely in such case—no wife can  
Be more than a comfort, and tender, and a soft recollection at home,  
But let no man make a surrender of the feet that should flutter and roam,  
Exploring, and proving, and sounding, with masculine powerful strides,  
The furthest world—surrounding a bevy of brainless brides !"

So they think ! the men who, with iron, seize, hamper, and harrow, and chain  
The women whose hearts they environ, thank Heaven, not seldom in vain !

But the poets, whose life is no better than one long passionate yearn,  
One ceaseless strain at a fetter, one restless stamp and return,  
Like a leopard whose wearisome marches have crumbled  
    the floor of his cage,  
For he sighs for the green broad arches of the forest, and  
    grinneth in rage,  
And wild unappeased recollection of his home in the  
    heart of the rocks,  
Where fawns are a daily refection, and totter 'neath  
    velvety knocks—  
As a man from the hand of a lady, who loves to be  
    smitten and bruised  
By her velvety palm, and the shady long curved claws  
    carefully used ;  
For she folds, and conceals, and retains them, till her  
    moment is present and clear,  
Then, swift, like a leopard, outstrains them, till he shrinks  
    and is pallid for fear,  
Though he learns in the end, in a season, that sweeter it  
    is to be slain  
By a beautiful woman in treason than to conquer a lesser,  
    and reign  
Over some meek-mouthed and subsiding, obedient, com-  
monplace girl

Voice over-subdued to be chiding, and lips over-solid to curl,  
And brain over-fat to be cruel, and hands over-timid to smite,  
To break up a lover as fuel, and torture, and linger, and bite,  
And watch, with the face of a leopard, his sorrow—then sparkle, and smile,  
And seek, like a wandering shepherd, a new sheep's face to defile !

The poets whose life is no better than one long passionate yearn,  
Give loves that are true to the letter as woman's are certain to turn,  
Recoil, and astonish, and bruise us, being bent like a reed in the hand,  
For, "men are but made to amuse us, as puppets to please us, and stand  
Like dancers or dolls in the middle of a circle of women around"—  
Who move to the tune of some fiddle, bright-wreathed, and decorous, and crowned  
With flowers and circlets sweet-scented, and the buds of the fields in their hair,

And tiaras and fashions invented to make beauty even  
more fair,  
To adorn, and improve, and to strengthen their slender  
and delicate grace  
Of limbs, and to largen and lengthen their goddess-hewn  
ivory face,  
To embellish and widen the river of wonderful tresses  
that flows,  
With a shake and a laugh and a quiver, over regions of  
fathomless snows,  
Undulating and coiling and leaping, and waving in long  
brown bands  
Over fingers dividing it, peeping, like stars, from the  
endless strands.

—The poets whose life is no better than one long pas-  
sionate sob,  
Seek not to escape from her fetter, nor seek they, weary,  
to rob  
A mistress of hours of labour, for her sweet presence is  
theirs  
Whether wielding a mattock or sabre, or whether a lover  
prepares  
Works grand, exalted, heroic, with masculine vigour and  
skill,

Unlike the aforesaid stoic, his mistress is evident still,  
For, truly, he *cannot* forsake her, for such is his temperament  
Through life he was fated to take her, wherever, whenever he went—  
Whether fighting, or if on a journey, or reading, or speaking at times,  
Or in intellectual tourney, or traversing alien climes,  
He seeks not to shun her, she meets him, she bends from the midday sky,  
And at eventide she entreats him, at night she is yet more nigh,  
When the moon is risen he sees her, he hears her in every wind,  
No poet is any who flees her, but churlish, uncouth, and unkind,  
A statesman, perhaps, but a lover in God's fair truth he is *not*,  
For this man's love doth discover his lady in every spot,  
As a rose, as a flower in the hedges, as a silver swan by the lake,  
As a soft-singing bird in the sedges, a soft-voiced lark in the brake,  
The pearly gleams of morning she adds to her maiden attire,

The moon shines but for adorning, the sun flames but  
for a fire  
Yet more to enhance her beauty—the grasses, with deli-  
cate stems  
Inwoven, are hers for a booty, and dewdrops are rich  
diadems,  
And all the heaven doth love her, the stars, and countless  
lights  
Whose orbs glide gently above her through sacred mists  
of the nights,  
And the poet her slave doth revere her, incarnate in  
everything,  
But most of all he can hear her when ripples of music  
ring,  
And never he strives to escape her, like common loveless  
men,  
In the folds of his heart he would drape her, like a  
sweet wild fawn in a den,  
Made one with her so wholly that, if for a moment  
he  
Forgot her, Death's melancholy must slacken forehead  
and knee,  
And into the hell of destruction of being his self must  
fall,  
Dragged down by a pitiless suction—this being the end  
of all!

Bound up, enclosed in a woman, as in some golden vault,  
Without her he fails to be human in type—for there is such a fault  
As loving her over-intensely, in a widening boundless ring,  
With no limits nor bars, but immensely, as the nightingales shamelessly sing  
With sweet puffed throats over-swelling, in an unsubdued strenuous way,  
Their psalmody pulsing and welling, till the night is as loud as the day ;  
So this passion forewarns and advises of the height and the heat of the flame  
That in heaven springs, sparkles, and rises, where no tears soften and tame  
The free broad play of the measures, and tunes, and the songs of the soul,  
Spreading forth, as an eagle, its treasures, and taking account of the whole,  
And searching, with vast retrospection, the former and infinite ways,  
With unclouded and clear recollection of years and of hours and days,  
And seconds, and dazzling minutes when love was a songbird and sweet,

When couples were tuneful as linnets, and lips very tender to meet,  
And hands very ready at clasping, and waists very slender and near,  
And palms very close in the grasping, and love's palace and presence was here.  
But passion, as such, is a token of the wonders about to be shown,  
The ecstasies sealed and unspoken, that heaven retains for its own,  
When kisses are perfect and cease not, but deepen and mount with the morn,  
And lips cling fast and release not each other when daylight is born—  
For the first strange sense and emotion is there a perpetual boon,  
Nor is there reflux of the ocean, but a constant increase of the moon  
Of beauty and laughter and labour, of sweet and immaculate hands  
That know neither sword-hilt nor sabre, but an endless peace through the lands  
Shines, gleams, and is manifest over broad acres of countless corn,  
And crimson expanses of clover, and grass-fields wild and unshorn

By the covetous hands of invaders, and the ruthless  
trample of steeds,  
With cannon and carts for their aiders, till the corn is a  
pasture of weeds.

In heaven return and are taken the dreams and desires  
we saw  
When over us fell as a shaken, sweet robe Love's insa-  
tiate law,  
And we first were aware of her beauty, and the endless  
delight of her voice,  
Being one with strong labour and duty, and unconquered  
heroical choice  
Of the firmer side and the stronger, whether life be the  
last thing or no,  
Whether souls shall endure and be longer than death's  
cold enfeebling flow,  
Than the waves of the ultimate river that scatter the  
ultimate sands,  
With a dash and a sparkle and quiver of salt and in-  
vincible hands,  
On the extreme shores, where the seamless, blue-grey  
plants gleam and are cold,  
And spirits crowd, naked and dreamless, and wan and  
forgotten and old,

To ask for a boat and a steerer, if any may haply be found  
Who shall skilfully usher them nearer to a higher, less treacherous ground,  
Where mountains are firm and are stable, and grasses are tender and sweet,  
And a dead man perhaps may be able to rise on regenerate feet,  
And walk, and may shout, and deliver his soul in a new-born song—  
Then beckon the spirits that quiver, to be valiant, and hasten along,  
For one has made trial and found it, the new and the exquisite life,  
And has clasped and has gathered and bound it, as a flower made short by the knife,  
In a nosegay to handle and cover his naked and robeless form,  
For death is no bride, nor a lover, but a searching and pitiless storm,  
As of hail to unfasten and rend us, as of snows to disperse us and bind,  
As of violent emotions to end us, in a rage and downfall of the mind.

But whether death brings a conclusion, and once slays  
each man, or no,  
Whether some new and wonderful fusion of spirit and  
body may flow  
And rush in a torrent together, and so a beginning be  
born  
Of sweeter, more summerlike weather, and a softer, more  
summerlike morn,  
And brighter, more summerlike seasons, and a nobler,  
more musical day,  
Or whether the ruin of reasons and spirits Death's hand  
doth convéy,  
Being terrible, cold, and remorseless, having never a  
boat nor a steed  
To traverse that river, but horseless at the hour of ulti-  
mate need,  
And a man, with no weapon and helpless, shall wrestle  
and shout and be slain  
By that monster barren and whelpless who slaughters  
and gives not again,  
But takes and he swallows, and straightway his gullet is  
opened anew  
As a wide and insatiable gateway with humanity travel-  
ling through  
In an army of corpses for ever, to feed him and nourish  
and keep

His stomach in constant endeavour, lest it fail and be  
torpid and sleep,  
And so one man should escape him, and rise, and by  
stroke of his sword  
Unmake and despoil and unshape him, overhurling our  
tyrant and lord,  
The king of the centuries seated with our pangs and our  
tears at his feet,  
For he loves to be sought and entreated, and mankind's  
homage is sweet,  
And he loves the incense of the altar, and the songs that  
waver and strain,  
And the sounds that diminish and falter, and the voices  
that murmur in pain,  
And the women that groan and implore him for sweet-  
hearts, husbands, and sons,  
For as ointment their trouble flows o'er him, and as  
spikenard sparkles and runs !—  
Whether life be the victor or death be, our swords or his  
pitiless feet,  
Whether his red throat or our breath be more lasting,  
and subtle, and sweet,  
We know that Love smileth immortal, and her hands are  
the hands of the free,  
As a woman she watcheth the portal, and encloseth the  
floor of the sea

Of existence in her sweet girdle, in gracious and merciful bands,  
And death is a corpse on a hurdle by the light and the force of her hands ;—  
We know that, though we are forsaken, and our spirits are torn and accursed,  
Love's empire is safe and unshaken, and stable and firm as at first,  
For, like a long breaker from seaward, Love tramples and passes our lives  
Left broken and drowning to leeward, but Love is a lion and thrives.

## MY BROTHER.

TO A. C. S.

BROTHER, my brother, my sad-toned brother—  
The same as ever, but yet more fair,  
Thou shalt surely find her ; never another ;  
And cool, sweet hands of her grace shalt share.

My pale, strong brother, my sweet-winged brother,  
Thou shalt know that summer-filled, rose-fed air  
In heaven, and *her* face—never another—  
And “the likeness and look of her throat and hair.”

O brother to sorrow, O bay-crowned brother,  
With the thorns upon brows as a weight to wear,  
*She* hath to soothe thee, *she* and none other—  
Thy soul to the meadows of peace to bear.

O brother, my brother, my clear-voiced brother,  
With a name to weep and a name to dare,  
That old one love of thine, never another,  
*Shall* be “startled and stricken, awake and aware.”

Ah ! brother, brother, my well-loved brother,  
I know thy love, and am bold to declare  
That thou *shalt* find her—as sweet, and none other,  
And the eyes, and the lips, and the old same hair.

## THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

THE children of men came nigh to me,  
And sang of the loves that were lost,  
And the blight, and the spears of the frost,  
Red splinters, and spars wind-tost,  
And the tears in their eyes I could see,  
And the signs of the swords that exhaust ;

And black-stained woe upon faces,  
As when a man presses grapes—  
And abundant rustle of crapes  
I heard, and I saw strange shapes,  
And white, bruised arms of our graces,  
And necks made red at the napes ;

And sounds of sighing and sorrow,  
And sweet, wan faces and pale,  
And a dismal multifold wail

I heard, and I saw boats sail  
To a sea with no to-morrow,  
And a cloudless sky without veil.

And I laughed to think of the roses,  
And the loves, and the sweet lost days,  
And the untrodden fair long ways,  
And the grasses, and untouched sprays  
Of the chestnuts, and one that reposes  
On the beach that heaven obeys ;

The fair gold beach of the present,  
Clothed with stones and with sand,  
A beautiful soft-spun land—  
And sweet on the floor is her hand,  
And her feet to the weeds are pleasant,  
And her soles to that wet far strand.

### A PRAYER.

O BROAD, sweet death, with tender hands and eyes,  
Wilt thou not hear, and flutter unto me,  
And let me presently awake and see  
The summer—and her image in thy skies ?

*June 20, 1871.*

## THE SAME, AND NOT ANOTHER.

THE same, and *not* another !  
The old face, and eyes, and well-remembered hair,  
With heaven's pure light upon them shed more fair,  
*These* wait for thee, my brother,  
On the cool white marble threshold, of life's last long  
stair.

The same, and not another !  
As she used to be in the glory of her youth,  
A very rose of womanhood in sooth,  
*This flower* for thee, my brother,  
Waits, after death is traversed, and sobs make room for  
truth.

The same, and not another !  
For there is not any other in the world,

And out of it thy soul has swift been hurled  
    In search of her, my brother,  
And the wings of thy sweet songfulness are choked and  
    furled.

The same, and not another !  
For there is not any other in the skies,  
And broken thy sweet lute unsmitten lies,  
    My brother, O my brother,  
And round about thy forehead the cold night wind flies.

The same, and *not* another !  
Or else I say there is not any God,  
And a shadow in the place of him has trod  
    The earth—and our Mother  
Is *no* mother, and abolished is the beauty of her nod.

## WHAT THINK YOU?

Love he hath taken away,  
And roses, and over us grey  
Sad clothes he hath chosen to convey—  
Think you that he can be God?

Yea ! for the rose shall be sweet,  
And our lips shall the same lips meet,  
When the silver sound of her feet  
Is present—at Death's calm nod.

Love he hath taken, and a bride,  
And cold is our unkissed side ;  
Think you, when this doth betide,  
That the king that they praise can be good ?

Yea ! for the flower shall be fair,  
In congenial, sweet-washed air  
In heaven ; he takes, to prepare  
The very thing that we would.

Love he hath taken, and our soul,  
And white seas over us roll ;  
Think you he knoweth the whole,  
Is he pitiless—this strong Lord ?

Nay ! for the lily shall be new,  
And a dainty attire of dew  
She shall smile, sweet lady, to view,  
And over her balm shall be poured.

Love he hath taken, our delight,  
And wrapped us around with the night,  
What think you ? Can this be right ?  
*Is there a God ?*

Yea ! for the love is sweet  
That tenderly touches the feet  
Of Death, and is eager to meet  
Death's keen rod.

## GIVE ME THAT ROSE.

GIVE me that rose ! I see that it has blown  
Upon your bosom, give me, for mine own,  
That rose to which such favour has been shown,  
*Give* me that rose !

Give me that rose, the eager lover saith,  
Give me that rose, made brighter by your breath,  
To be to me a sign, a token until death—  
Give me that rose !

Give me that rose ; you have not given me much ;  
A finger now and then, a dainty lip to touch,  
But never any boon, no tender favour such  
As to that rose !

*GIVE ME THAT ROSE.*

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And *this* she gave him ; nothing else beside.  
To another she was given, as a blossom, as a bride,  
But her lover withered, grew feeble, and he died,  
As did the rose !

## DEATH IS BETTER.

DEATH is better ! and why ?

Because the sands of the soul,  
That stammer and flutter and roll,  
Halt, and are tamed, and are dry,  
When their tremulous beads run nigh  
To that ultimate fiery goal.

Death is better ; for there

We are not plagued any more  
By things we cherished before,  
And no love's wonderful hair  
Comes fluttering, fierce and fair,  
Along that desolate shore.

Death is better ! for life

Is an unsearched desperate pit,  
And our souls are swallows and flit

At the mouth in a tortuous strife—  
But when Death gleams and his knife,  
We do not flutter but sit.

Death is better ; so come,  
Thou much-loved villainous knave,  
And scatter the mould of the grave  
With cunning finger and thumb ;  
Believe us, that there are some  
Thy coming shall calm and save.

For Death hath a diverse face,  
To some he is strong and a cord,  
To others the blade of a sword  
Keen-sharpened, devoid of grace—  
To others a gentle embrace  
And a soft and supreme reward.

For as the wind in the dark,  
Coming down in a railway train  
In summer, is blown in vain  
Round that travelling swift-winged spark,  
So is death but a toothless shark  
To a soul whose life is pain.

One long throb, and a flow  
Of one long pitiless stream,  
The groan of an endless dream,

And a pale perpetual show  
Of sounds that flicker and glow,  
Waver and sparkle and beam ;

But never rise to a lamp,  
To the light of the face of a bride,  
To a strong-pulsed silvery tide,  
But are intermittent and damp—  
For souls foam hard and champ  
Their bits, when lost loves ride ;

Ride, and are bitter, and near,  
That never a man may escape  
That following sweet-voiced shape,  
But his soul may bend and may hear  
For ever the tramp of a fear,  
And for ever the rustle of crape ;

And for ever the shiver of hands,  
And for ever the feet of the lost,  
And the throbs that search and exhaust,  
Girdled with steel-spun bands,  
For her hair, in sweet wide strands,  
Is over him waved and tossed ;

Over him, down to his feet,  
A terror, and yet so good  
That, just as an image of wood,  
He hath halted upright to meet  
That shower of soft rain sweet,  
Hath paused, and considered, and stood—  
  
And hath tenderly pursed his face  
To enjoy, and drink, and receive ;  
For only a fool would leave  
A goddess-inhabited place—  
A distant and doubtful grace,  
And an unknown boon to achieve.

## FREEDOM.

### PHOEBUS TO MARGARET.

THOU art mine, my lady, now—  
Eyes, and heart, and hands, and brow ;  
Let him sound the bitter trumpet of his loss,  
As we cross the swollen river,  
And the waves that climb and quiver,  
Laughing at the fiery crested heads they toss.

Thou art mine, my lady, now !  
Let him agonize, and bow,  
And stand staring on the shore with feeble hands,  
As we leave his face behind,  
Mute, and thunderstruck, and blind,  
And his feet that spurn and violate the sands.

Thou art mine, my lady, now !  
And therefore do I vow,  
By thy lips pressed close, and tender, and thrice sweet,  
That I will be to thee  
Not a husband such as he,  
But a lover everlasting, as is meet.

For a husband is a fool,  
And they learn in that slow school  
Lisps, and faint infirm emotions, and cold words ;  
But ours is such a life  
As the merry mad-cap strife  
'Mong the reckless, loud, and violent-hearted birds.

*MARGARET TO PHŒBUS.*

Thou art mine, my Phœbus ! I  
Have ta'en courage to deny  
And make havoc of the popular foul creed ;  
And I do it with a loud,  
Loving heart ; I build my shroud,  
And I pierce myself, and bruise myself, and bleed—

With my own unwavering hands,  
Leaving husband and fair lands,

And a palace, and a city, for thy sake ;  
 Counting this a thing of course,  
 So I add to thy sweet force  
 What of love my circled loving hands can take.

So I carry unto thee  
 The true golden heart of me,  
 Unpurchased and unshaken by his gold ;  
 For, in that I am thine,  
 I swear that I will shine  
 As no wife, but as thy true love from of old.

For a wife is but a dame  
 Who conceals, for very shame,  
 The absence of the quality of love ;  
 But, Phœbus, thou and I  
 Are as tender birds that fly,  
 Winged with tender floating plumage, up above.

*PHŒBUS TO MARGARET.*

There to tarry and be strong,  
 And to hurl a sinking song  
 On the heads of listening loveless churls beneath ;  
 For our children, as a crown,  
 Some clear message sending down,  
 Some clear silver note of warning we bequeath.

In the trees and in the blue,  
Where, Margaret, I and you,  
In the trees and in the heavens—you and I—  
Shall ascend, and, being strong,  
Dart an arrow of gold song,  
To awake a timid people by-and-by.

That these may be as we,  
And may hearken, and may see  
Love's true guerdon, Love's true victory and crown ;  
And may burst the iron bands  
With a might of iron hands,  
Breaking battlements and walls of custom down ;

That Love may be as free  
As the blue unfettered sea,  
Having wings as are an eagle's, and her eyes  
Bent in red unflinching gaze,  
Through the mists and severed haze,  
Towards the circle of the sun about to rise.

## LOVE'S FLIGHT.

I WENT a sailing, sailing,  
With my lady bright,  
Wings failing, and plumes paling,  
Through the night.

By many misty meadows  
Devoid of bloom,  
And dim blue shadows,  
Cleaving the gloom ;

By many green hedges,  
And rivers, and broad lakes,  
By whose edges  
The fen-grass quakes ;

By many tall mountains,  
Snowy and sublime,

And sweet flower-circled fountains,  
Whose ripple is a rhyme ;

By many moons, and flaming  
Immense red trees,  
We flew together, aiming  
Our flight at these ;

By many wrinkled oceans,  
Crawling at our feet,  
We fluttered, and the motions  
Of our plumes were sweet ;

Through high exulting airs  
We went, and smiled,  
Remembering soft prayers  
When a child—

For we saw them seated  
As angels, yellow and red,  
In the skies, and greeted  
Each familiar head ;

Lost to us for ever,  
Unanswered, so we thought,  
Trembling backward never,  
Upward hurled for nought.

But my gentle lady  
Seized my hands, and said,  
“ Rest, as in some shady  
Hollow of sweet bed ”—  
And then first she made me  
Aware that I was *dead!*

## HEAVEN : A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY.

A VISION of Heaven. On the marble floors  
Stood three immortals ; two were women ; one  
Passed, as a man, towards the gold-gleaming doors,

Whose latches, by angelic palms undone,  
Admitted to an open flowery lawn,  
Burnished, and overladen by the sun ;

It seemed about the hour of crimson dawn ;  
One woman's eyes shone most divinely green—  
Like green seas—and her neck was like a fawn—

Slender and graceful—and she stepped a queen,  
And a most delicate dimple on her cheek  
Did testify of merry wit unseen,

Which whoso will be valiant to seek,

Like some bold knight upon a perilous quest,  
Shall first be pure, and temperate, and meek,

And skilled, besides, in courtly quip and jest ;  
But when she smiled, it was as if the sun  
Burst with a sudden flame some larchen nest,

And through the tender green red rays did run  
Laughing, and lissome on their fiery feet—  
Even such a brilliance from her beauty spun

Did overcome beholders with a sweet  
Exuberance, and inner sense of bloom ;  
And as the impulsive swan's approach is fleet,

And as his breast divides the watery tomb,  
Like some bright angel gliding through the airs,  
So did her steps the rapid meads consume,

The other lady's radiant brow declares  
Keen wit, and subtle force of many things ;  
So, swept 'mid many soft celestial pairs,

They advance, and, smiling, each to the other sings  
Of unforgotten earth, and daisies pink,  
And forests where the fairies dance in rings,

And rushes bright in spring-tide on the brink  
Of silver rivers, quivering through the haze,  
Where wag-tails stoop their slender heads to drink,

And water-rats scud swiftly through the maze  
Of flowering reed, and peppermint, and grass,  
And blue forget-me-not, and woodbine sprays

That overhang the stream ; and beetles pass  
Through the great leaves of lilies, white or yellow,  
That gleam like flakes of vari-coloured glass

Upon the waves—see what a supple fellow  
Is that one gliding all athwart the reeds,  
Blue-backed and shiny ! Tiny voices mellow

Of happy insects, too, the passer heeds,  
And as he dreams upon a thymy bank,  
To soothing whisper soothing sound succeeds,

And half-seen shapes do glimmer through the rank  
And steamy water-foliage ; star-like flowers,  
And here and there he views the nimble prank

Of fishes, frogs, and swallows ; and in bowers  
Of bright green starwort dragon-flies are seated,  
Not testing yet their vibratory powers ;

And many subtle notes of birds repeated  
Flame from the neighbouring woods, like silver streams  
Of sound and colour mixed, and a conceited

Loud thrush is ululant ; his bright throat teems  
With vocal fancies, and from spray to spray  
He hurls the windy utterance of his dreams.

With many visions of so sweet a day  
The ladies, swept through heaven on crystal wing,  
Had, erst, beguiled the tedium of their way,

Teaching each other novel tricks to sing,  
And laughing now and then, as woman will,  
Being an artless, simple-headed thing.

But now they stayed each rapid plumy quill,  
Seeing a man, and, overjoyed, exclaimed,  
“ Ha ! thou art mine, sweet, all unaltered still ! ”

Forth from each face a recognition flamed—  
“ He is my very husband,” says the one,  
“ The very man I married, trimmed, and tamed.”

“ Nay,” says the other, “ he is that sweet sun  
Who shone upon my early life, made bitter  
By thoughts impoverished and dreams undone.”

So, like two linnets in a bough, they twitter,  
Each fixing on him earnest supple eyes,  
That with repressed desire do flame and glitter,  
  
Even as a double sunset in the skies,  
One green, one grey, but either tinged with red ;  
For in hot cheeks the amorous roses rise.

“ *You* married him—he loved *me*; for he said  
His very soul and all its wealth was mine,  
And in a leash his power of voice I led ;

“ So that he cared for nothing, save to twine  
Delicious wreaths of violet-scented songs,  
And these in many a feathery, leafy line .

“ Flew round about my unheeding feet in throngs,  
As bees besiege a blooming currant-bush,  
Whose budding honey to each mouth belongs ;

“ So sonnets, with an agile heat and rush,  
Did overwhelm me, till, as a red rose,  
Down to my shoulders I was fain to blush !

“ Say, sir, are you not mindful now of those ?  
“ But, lady, 'tis my wife ! I thought that here  
In heaven all hearts were crystal as the snows,

“ And each incapable of any sneer ;  
But that, in truth, 'tis not exactly so  
I now begin, sweet early love, to fear.

“ Oh ! *thou* didst waken first the rosy glow  
Of passion ; when I called, thou didst disdain  
The fiery floods that then did overflow,

“ Like some volcano's luminous red rain ;  
And so I married *her* to lay remorse—  
I married *her* to cudgel thick-backed pain ;

“ I thought Platonic love ! the winged horse  
Prevailed in heaven, and that his golden wings  
Surpassed all doubt and selfishness of course.

“ I see that heaven is paved with other things ;  
That, as on earth, no woman can abide  
A rival, but another's presence stings.

“ I thought to float *so* softly on the tide  
Of double ministry ; but now, behold !  
A fissure doth disperse my double bride,

“ My woman, wrought of silver and of gold—  
For first love is of gold, and after her,  
'Tis well if even silvery gauze enfold

“ The woman fashionèd of later air ;  
A large unselfishness, the people taught,  
In heaven should give to each the power to share

“ Her proper influence, and envy naught ;  
But now those sidelong looks do testify  
That even in heaven can jealousy be caught,—

“ And that strong passion agitates the sky  
Wherein with gauzy wings, and crystal mail,  
The cherubim and seraphim do fly ;

“ See, my sweet green-eyed love is still and pale,  
And my soft grey-eyed charmer is on fire  
To flesh her talons in the other’s veil,

“ And red with pent-up volume of desire :  
Oh, miserable man ! to be divided  
Upon the faggots of so sweet a pyre,

“ Thus tortured, and perverted, and derided,  
When to be sacrificed for either were  
As if a ravished saint to heaven glided

“ In cars and happy pinions light as air ;  
Now my first love, reviving, burns me through,  
And wraps me in unutterably fair

“ Excess of roses, and a pearly dew  
Too sweet and too ethereal to tell,  
Save only to the sympathetic few

“ On whom the bardic fire from heaven fell.  
And now my later lady with her mouth,  
So soft, and as the purple violets’ smell,

“ O’whelms me, like a garden in the south :  
One virgin is the fit dower of a man,  
But two do trickle over me in truth,

“ As if two equal-bodied streamlets ran  
From a piny mountain, and the one is green,  
The other grey, and silver-tinged, and wan ;

“ Even so the pearly brilliance of my queen  
Dismays me softly, and her hands surpass  
The beauty of all soft things later seen,

“ As spring’s is sweeter than the autumn grass,  
And apple-blossom glorious in May—  
But all such pink and delicate bloom doth pass

“ Not able to resist the straighter ray  
Of Phœbus ; then the sweet grey eyes do gleam  
Upon me, and her bosom doth display

“ Scent and effulgence of a summer dream.  
My beautiful, my eyes of violet,  
That with delicious thoughts do bud and teem,

“ Dost mind the forest-glade in which we met,  
And the first love-look, and the first long kiss,  
With lips immutably together set ?

“ But now the lady shines who swayed the bliss  
Of boyhood, and, behold, she loves me best,  
And, like a meteor, risen with fiery hiss,

“ Her splendour overcomes my supple breast !  
For, as a swan, she struggles through and through,  
With tender feet, the reedy dismal nest

“ Of my sad bosom, and it blooms anew  
With lilies white and yellow, and with flowers  
Red, purple as the heaven’s own holy hue,

“ And, see, she fills me with eternal powers  
Of thought and understanding ; O my lady,  
Poured over me in mystic maiden showers

“ Of white dispersed effulgence, as a shady  
Sweet rivulet doth crystallize a wood—  
The soft continuance of that stream had made me

"A god divinely jubilant and good ;  
But thou didst fly in terror through the hollows,  
With rapidly receding, tarnished hood,

"Like frightened purple backs of scudding swallows ;  
But now thy sweet face softly doth return,  
And over hill and dale thy adorer follows—

"And all his spirits tremblingly do yearn,  
And all his heart is compassed by a flame  
That doth divide, and extirpate, and burn

"The later follies of a lower aim :  
O take him to thy breast, and let the splendour  
Of thine immediate rose-bloom soothe and tame

"The ravished spirit that he again would render  
To be irrevocably, wholly, thine ;—"  
But then a sweet voice, silvery and tender,

Did whisper, "Nay, my hero, thou art *mine!*"  
And I was 'ware that in some mossy wood,  
Under a monstrous growth of purple pine,

Over my head a slender seraph stood,  
And loaded me with violets, and a love,  
From foot to crimson apex of tall hood,

Unspeakable, did circle her ; above  
'Twas as a golden halo, and her crown  
Was seemly as the gold crest of a dove

Through reverent sprays of larches fluttering down,  
Whose back is green, but head as rapid fire ;  
And, in my dream, the woman seemed to frown

As if retaining some untold desire ;—  
So I became aware that heaven and death  
Cannot set straight the bent strings of the lyre,

As one with overweening fancy saith ;  
For that a woman will not know content,  
Nor peaceful passage of her gentle breath,

Until she be supreme—his heart not rent,  
But all her own. It will not do to say  
“ In heaven bright-gold unselfish wings are lent,”

For still a woman's shonlders are of clay,  
And their pure warmth shall melt the heavenly plumes,  
And make them as the feathers of to-day,

Which her fierce soul repeatedly consumes ;  
Platonic preachers ! I do bid you all  
Forth from among dim philosophic tombs,

And mark this trio in the golden hall  
Of heaven, and 'mid the turrets and white towers  
That overtop and overshadow all.

Mark the rich access of new heavenly powers,  
But see that passion hath the ruddier grown  
For influx of red blood from heavenly flowers,

And more imperious yet her urgent tone.

“ Each heart,” ye say, “ shall overshadow each.”  
Seizing each petal straightly towards it blown,

“ And similar tendrils every soul shall reach  
Towards similar tendrils, for to each belongs  
A repertory of some separate speech,

“ And unto God the central Song of songs :  
Where sympathy is present, there in heaven  
Is union, and the close angelic throngs

“ Make marriages, by similar feeling driven !  
And many marriages of earth are changed,  
And fulsome links of earth asunder riven

“ By the broad wind whose healthy breezes ranged  
Over celestial fields”—it will not do ;  
Though all the angelic hosts aloud harangued

A woman, would she be content to view  
Herself dispersed among the red and green,  
Red Gabriel perhaps, or grim Ezekiel blue ?

Even as passion on the earth hath been,  
So it shall be for ever ; o'er the hills  
Of heaven there shines no novel sun, I ween,

Dispersing and redeeming all our ills ;  
No novel rainbow, making all things clear,  
Illumes the tender froth of heavenly rills,

But there is turgid passion—even as here—  
And jealousy, and, perhaps, even hate,  
And insolence, and bigotry, and fear,

And, when the seasons hurl us, soon or late,  
Into that vapid waste of hazy sky,  
There will be quarrels between Ruth and Kate,

Nor will Ruth hesitate to tell a lie,  
To bring her Alfred sooner to her breast,  
For the immediate pressure of God's eye—

Since, sooner shall a bird forsake her nest,  
Than woman be content to mix her soul  
With the great soul of Love, at second-best, !

And, since we cannot make things sweet and whole,  
We count creation but a sorry jest,  
And join God's laughter, as the wild years roll.

THOU COULD'ST NOT WATCH WITH ME.

I.

THOU could'st not watch with me, my lady fair !  
The winds are sharp, and bitter is the night,  
And thou art all too weak to wait the light  
That, like a lion springing from his lair,  
Shall presently be with us in red might :  
  
But thou art binding dilatory hair,  
And sending shafts of singing through the air.

II.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady sweet !  
The past is pleasant, and the future sad ;  
The past is easy, but new roads are bad,  
And flints are merciless to tender feet,  
Demanding many a soft flower for a pad :

Stay, tarry quiet in thy soft retreat,  
Nor tempt the new day's labour and its heat.

## III.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady white !  
Thine are the roses and the pleasant meads,  
And the good simple crowns of former creeds ;  
But not the ecstatic rapture of the fight,  
And the endless garland of the soul that bleeds :

I would not change my part with thine to-night,  
Though thy rich kisses led my coward's flight.

## IV.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady pale !  
Thine are the quiet valleys, and the rivers  
Where the long brown reed suns itself and shivers ;  
But not the mixing of red swords and mail,  
And noise of broken spears and sundered quivers :

Which, in the end, shall tell a loftier tale,  
And one of kinglier more proud avail ?

V.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady slow !  
Thine are the faces hollow with despair ;  
But mine, new hopes, where a new moon is fair,  
Casting across wide seas a flood of snow,  
Impearling all the ocean from her lair :  
  
'Tis dark with thee, sweet ; but it is not so  
Under this crescent and her pearly glow.

VI.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady sad !  
Where are the hopes and thoughts that soared together  
In the old amazing, reckless, foam-winged weather,  
And soft prognostications we have had,  
Trying fortune at a dandelion feather ?

Thou hast left me, thou art feeble, thou art bad—  
And I am but a broken-hearted lad !

VII.

Thou could'st not watch with me, my lady, whom  
I would have followed, even unto death

And far beyond, if so thy rose-bud breath  
And all thy wonderful rose-scented bloom  
Were mine, in such a manner as Love saith :

For then there were no terror in the tomb,  
And every sin that bounty should consume.

## A LAMENT.

"By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept."

BEFORE I lose Love's being, and my heart  
Ceases to feel the pressure of his dart,  
I would return, once only, to my love,  
As to the sweet nest of a mountain dove  
Her amorous mate returns with eager cries ;  
So would I once more gird me, and arise,  
And seek, rejecting fiercely milder pleas,  
Th' unaltered and imperishable seas,  
Where, with that soft-haired woman for my bride,  
I dreamed upon the silver-flowing tide.

All presents to her feet, and songs, I brought,  
And wayward golden gifts transcending thought,  
And all the blossom of a hoped-for name,  
And passion, as a beautiful large flame

Aspiring, with red increase of clear top,  
To mountain-summits, where God's eagles stop  
Upon their journey to the heavenly city ;  
All tenderness, and fair renown, and pity,  
And goodness, and the eternal hope of life,  
I spread before her sweet embroidered knife,  
That she might slay the very heart of me,  
Like a white breaker tumbling in mid-sea  
Upon the tiny fabric of a boat ;  
So was I willing never more to float  
Upon the yeasty tempest of life's tide,  
But rather prayed that, clasping a cold bride,  
I might awake, with flourish of cold horn,  
The mists and melancholy planets born  
Among the icy mountain-tops of death ;  
Yea, had her sweet and honey-scented breath  
But mingled, as a flowing stream, with mine,  
We had not been as mortals, but divine,  
Made one for ever with th' unyielding gods,  
And all their fame, and glitter of their rods,  
Mixed in some mystic undivided way,  
And ruling, with indisputable sway,  
The plumage of the forest, and the corn,  
And all the flowers from Sol's sweet breathing born,  
The poppies red that fragrant Ceres wears,  
And myrtle that full-bosomed Venus bears,

And every tiny blossom of the field—  
Some such a sceptre we had come to wield.

And we had ridden as sea-birds on the foam,  
And made the azure height a ready home,  
And trodden the mystic islands that divide  
With white brows the soft Caribbean tide,  
Where are all fair shapes, and the water flows  
As from some trembling sunset-fount that glows  
Against the pearly bosom of the sky.

O sweet breast ! once brought tenderly most nigh  
To my own yearning spirit in a dream,  
I try the breasts of women, but they seem  
But as cold shapes in colder marble dressed  
Compared with that tense vision which possessed  
My heart, and mind, and body to the feet.

For all the room was filled with fragrance sweet,  
An odour so ineffable and strange;  
That to no purpose doth my fancy range  
The hollows of fair diction, to describe  
A nature so ethereal—next a tribe  
Of soft flowers, as it were—I saw them not—  
Or spirits dressed as soft flowers, free from spot,

Flowed over me, and with clear gentle hands  
Removed each stain contracted in these lands  
Of poverty, and foul disease, and death ;  
But, over and above, I felt thy breath,  
My sweet lost lady, as a silver stream,  
Or odorous music fainting thro' a dream,  
Pervading and possessing all my flesh  
And all the tissues of my soul, with mesh  
Most delicate, and vibratory, and fine ;  
Past sins and blessings in a clear great line  
Stood white before my clear transfigured gaze,  
No longer hampered with the fog and haze  
Of this our dull mortality, but keen  
As the true emerald glances of my queen ;  
Then came the wonder of your spirit-form,  
Riding superb upon a flowery storm  
Of snows, and mists, and roses, and soft things,  
With dainty flutter of seraphic wings,  
Creating, like rapt Jacob, in that spot  
A jewelled altar excellently wrought,  
So that I said, although I was alone,  
“ How soft you are, sweet, and how soft a tone  
Hath pierced my melting bosom through and through.”  
As with the touch of circumambient blue,  
Your spirit then encircled me—I wept,  
And all my involuntary senses crept

For very awe at the unaccustomed sight  
Of so superb a lady robed in white  
Dividing the thick vapour of my room  
With wings and body equal in white bloom,  
And breasts whereon the scarlet blossoms smiled  
Like the soft breasts and beauty of a child,  
When thou wast very near—and then I rose,  
Desiring this strange vision to disclose  
Its inner sense ; but not a word was said,  
It was as if I held a woman dead.  
After, I slept, but in my hollow dreams  
You walked my brain's mute chamber, clad in beams  
Spun from the argent tissues of the moon,  
And clothed me with so silvery a swoon  
That, when I woke, my face was like a god  
From whose fair cheeks a splendour has o'erflowed.  
I slept, and woke, and slept and woke again,  
But all the time you watched me, and the pain,  
And dismal solitude, and groans of years,  
Fled to a lone abyss, dissolved in tears,  
And all the murky vapour of despair ;—  
O thou most delicate, O thou most fair,  
With sweet short flower-lips, and the emerald eyes,  
Hear these last glimmering snatches as they rise,  
Recalling all the wondrous things I felt  
When spirit into spirit seemed to melt !

And yet you loved another, and our doom  
Is separate, and that garden of choice bloom  
Was but a dreamy Paradise in air,  
Supremely unreal, and so, supremely fair.  
For every craving then was satisfied,  
A golden god had found a silver bride,  
And the sweet torrents flowing from your mouth,  
Like inundating streamlets in the south,  
Washed quickly with a moist delicious breath  
Each sin and every feebleness to death.  
Because the dream was fair, it was not true,  
I am divided wholly, sweet, from you,  
And on this windy earth we meet no more,  
Neither upon the large eternal shore  
Where Dante's pallid ghost for ever sits,  
And near him Beatrice, a sea-bird, flits,  
Striving in vain with amorous beat of wings  
To re-awaken perished former things,  
For loves sink wholly, and their end is death,  
And no joy re-arouses their spent breath.  
Love, I was tender then—but now I know,  
Since thou hast fled and left my spirit so,  
That iron, for red ichor, fills my veins  
That bubble with intolerable pains  
And sick desires swift-hastening to the tomb—  
Ah ! as I think, my lady's white wings loom

From the sad corners of Time's hollow cave,  
And in the air her banished pennons wave,  
As once above the tumbling northern seas  
She fluttered, like a white bird in the breeze,  
Leading her panting follower quickly on :  
Since that date many novel plumes have shone,  
But none possess the power to move the stone  
That Death's perpetual energy has thrown  
Over the entrance of our risen life,  
Or loosen his implacable red knife.

Sweet poets round their mistresses have flung  
The mantle of the lyre from which they sung ;  
With some such melody, had I the skill,  
The coming years and lustres I would fill,  
Sending thy name, like Dante, in a song,  
The eternal haunts and billowy meads among,  
That so the untested ages might be 'ware  
Of thine own glittering maze of black-brown hair  
Which drew me, as a tender forest draws  
A fairy cognizant of its sweet laws,  
Desirous there to penetrate, and hide  
Washed bosom in the green tumultuous tide,  
Plunging, as in a delicate loud stream,  
Into that moving mass of leaflets—theme

Delicious ! so would I have plunged my sorrow  
Deep in those tresses lost for many a morrow,  
Removing 'mid their delicate perfume  
Each trace of former treachery and gloom.  
O passion ! passion ! passion ! now I die  
Hurled from thy blazing and voluptuous sky,  
Even as an eagle-claw might hurl a lark  
Into a waste of deep abysses dark,  
Or cleave the broken spirit of a quail  
Who sought his azure pasture to assail ;—  
But once voluptuously my spirit trode,  
Armed like a blazing and abundant god,  
The fields that now I fail, alas ! to reach,  
Downdropping towards a miserable, low beach.  
O passion ! passion ! passion !—once as flame  
The holy impress of thy finger came,  
Resolving into one tempestuous night  
Thy former potency, and pristine might,  
And all thy former store of Love's young flowers,  
And honey mixed in frequent meads and bowers,  
But now thou art but as a woman fled,  
Leaving her lover cast away and dead !  
For all the world, and heaven, is nothing now,  
Not Caucasus with white careering brow,  
Nor monstrous marble-pillared Apennines,  
Nor tresses of the moist Italian vines,

Nor cities seated in the fickle North  
Where rain and sunstrokes dart, alternate, forth,  
Nor tumult of the happy bounding seas,  
Nor blessings flying on a summer breeze,  
Nor all the talk of birds, and lips of flowers,  
And lips of young girls in their rose-hung bowers,  
And laughter, and their happy smiling faces—  
I feel the loss of thee in all such places—  
And, from the loss of thee, I rise and wail  
Like billows on an autumn evening pale  
Lamenting the departure of the sun.  
O thou most delicate ! whose lips were spun,  
From roses culled by Venus in some nook  
Desirable, beside a bubbling brook,  
And whose fair cheeks Apollo's glory gave,  
And locks were plaited in a nymph-filled cave,  
And whose white arms sweet Juno's self alone  
Plucked from the handles of her ivory throne,  
And for whose eyes swart Vulcan searched the deep  
Where gods their emeralds and diamonds keep,  
And whose soft limbs were moulded by divine  
Dexterity from snows and eglantine,  
So that a lover felt thy bosom cold  
And liquid, mixed with those sweet flowers of gold,  
Pervade his trembling body through and through,  
Not otherwise than the descending dew

Drips gently on the slow rejoicing lawns,  
As with ten thousand steps of tiny fawns,  
Or as the horse-chestnut showers upon the ground  
Sweet blossoms, with a tender rippling sound—  
O thou most delicate and dainty bird !

Whose voice in the unknown avenues I heard,  
Mixed with the tender dreams and sobs of youth,  
For whose sake I aspired towards perfect truth,  
Seeking with ardent vision to discern  
The higher instinct at my every turn,  
And follow it through trouble unto death—

I say that heaven, if robbed of thy sweet breath,  
Is but a listless, hopeless heaven to me,  
Where I shall all indifferently be !

Oh ! songs, and vast abounding tunes that smote  
My spirit, sailing as a crystal boat  
Through oceans and abysses of fair dreams,  
How far away your giant concert seems ;—  
When all the sky was as a hollow bell,  
And earth was as a vale, in which there fell  
The abundant clamour and soft-sandalled feet  
Of music mystically tongued and sweet,  
Proclaiming vanished visions past recall,  
With Immortality beyond them all,  
Clear as a gate beyond the setting sun  
When labour and its turbulence is done,

And through that barrier with a gentle touch  
We pass, emerging from Death's icy clutch  
Into a bright array of newer things—  
O memory of each delight that clings  
Still to me with a frantic craving hand,  
Vanish, for 'tis her desolate command !

In heaven if we should meet, I know not how  
To gaze upon thee with untroubled brow ;  
For thou wast unto me as Beatrice,  
Although thine own heart was of foam or ice,  
Or as the fickle sea-weed that is tossed  
From amorous wave to wave, and straightway lost ;  
But I was faithful, and I mixed thy name  
With sounding currents of prophetic fame,  
And, when I walked in woods, and by swift streams,  
I saw thy garments vanish 'mid pale beams,  
Clothed in alluring drapery of mist ;  
The branches were divided by thy wrist,  
As, in the dainty fables of old Greece,  
Nymphs' shoulders, whiter than a lamb's white fleece,,  
Were fair against the bending branches green ;  
So, with all-fair thoughts mingled I, my queen,  
Thy spirit, and thy laughter, and thy form,  
Whether with purple pulse of thunder-storm,  
Or vast irradiance of the gleaming sky,  
And through sleep's lanes and meadows ardently

I fluttered forth, as to a trysting-place  
Where I should meet some silver-footed grace,  
Who, with full bosom and with rosy mouth,  
Should pacify the dread perpetual drouth  
Of my parched being—all the mountain-spurs  
Clothed grandly with illimitable firs,  
And with designs and marble shades inwrought,  
Were yours, by virtue of my fresh young thought,  
And, underneath the starry heaven and moon,  
I heard your voice, as an entrancing tune,  
And when I pressed my face against a rose,  
It was as if the breath that no man knows  
Delighted and enslaved me in a dream,  
And when the first sun cast his first gold beam  
Across the glittering pastures from the east,  
I held with thee a lone delicious feast ;  
For thou didst so possess me that I felt  
All pleasures through thy violent body melt,  
As through the violence of an organ-tune  
Stream, stars, and sun, and palpitating moon,  
All joys and sorrows of humanity  
Merged in the tumult of one raving sea,  
That shakes the trembling spirit till it groans,  
As purple mists of muffled undertones  
Swathe body, and soul, and sinews, and dumb flesh,  
In one resounding vibratory mesh,

Commingling and dispersing all things fair  
As with a current of intensest air,  
So that our nerves do creep upon the chords,  
Pierced, as it were, by exquisite sharp swords,  
Till, if we could, our very souls should leap  
Into the abyss of that organ-deep,  
Made one for ever with the eternal sound,  
And wandering as ghostly shades around  
The interior, whence the ghostly concert springs,  
Swept onward on inevitable strings ;—  
So, lady, doth my spirit fly to thee,  
Horsed on the thunders of loose melody,  
Ignorant, and craving only to be found  
Within the barriers of that mystic sound,  
At whose surpassing high command I build  
Fair crowns and colonnades with which I gild  
The trembling, holy precincts of my dream ;—  
O thou most delicate ! O thou whose beam  
Of maiden moonlight never fell across  
The ocean of my spirit ! what a loss  
And huge eternal undoing is mine,  
That thou wast never present, sweet, to twine  
The undying garlands of thy perfumed hands  
Around me, save upon the fruitless sands  
Of one immeasurably fragrant dream ;  
Through heaven thy weird departing beauties gleam,

And through that heaven,—most hollow, and sad, and pale,—

I still pursue, with wet remorseless sail,  
The shadow of the gliding of thy bark,  
Diminished now to a tremulous small spark  
Splashing the slender waves that crisp heaven's sea ;  
I am not ready to abandon thee,  
And by thine eyes' own emerald sparkling light  
I track thee through the terrors of Time's night.

Yea, as the music smites my earnest soul  
With rapt intelligence beyond control,  
I leave the city, and these southern plains,  
And all my fancy wings itself, and strains  
Bright plumes to meet the northern piercing blast,  
Pregnant with fair suggestions of the past.  
I stream along the windy echoing chords,  
Nursing the assistance that the tune affords,  
And feel heaven opened, as my spirit sails  
By flowery banks, and through responsive vales,  
And many forests, goodly, dark, and dim,  
And silver waters bubbling to the brim,  
And lanes made bright with yellow eglantine,  
And meads impurpled with the heavy vine ;  
Through these I wander, searching for my love,  
As the grey, winged desires of a sad dove

Flit over mounts, and valleys, and tall trees,  
In search of the receding mate she sees,  
Till they meet softly in a mossy nest,  
And all desires and troubles fade to rest.  
So do I, lifting wings of fancy large,  
Pursue by meadow, and wide lake, and marge  
Of the resounding, pitiless, broad sea,  
The flying phantom that I christen thee,  
Following through endless ranks of hollow corn,  
From eventide till the triumphant morn  
Sits on the mountains with a rosy cheek.  
But I—I find not the fair boon I seek,  
Not 'mid the moist abundant apple-groves,  
Spotted with grey disturbing wings of doves ;  
Not 'mid the vine-leaves, nor the wet long grass  
Through which, with tears and diligence, I pass ;  
Not in the sunset, nor the gleams of day ;  
Nor art thou hidden in twilight shadows grey.  
I may not see thee ; but I fling my song  
To rustle, like a floating star, among  
The billows of abundant black-brown hair,  
I found the sweetest gift of all gifts fair.  
Yea, well it was, my love, in very deed,  
That thou didst deign but passing little heed  
To my desire, for I had found thy breast  
A poisonous and over-bearing nest

To dwell in—thou hadst burnt me through and through  
As with a fiery rain of velvet dew,  
Leaving no mortal fabric to survive  
The immersion in that over-luscious hive.  
Yea, even as bees are drowned in honey sweet,  
I had swooned, a dead man, at thy fair, kind feet ;  
But, since they are cruel, my torn life is left,  
That otherwise had been so sweetly reft,  
So sweetly murdered. Ah ! these women find  
Dumb targets for their daggers in mankind,  
And when they see us bleeding, they rejoice  
With even a tenderer, more placid voice,  
And softer movement of white steady hands ;  
Their victims redden seas, and capes, and lands,  
And still the old passion seizes upon all  
Who step within the plastic earthly ball ;—  
Surely their breasts are whiter, so I say,  
Whose locks are tinged with age-announcing grey—  
Surely their breasts are sweeter than of old,  
And hair of far more wonderful deep gold  
Than when I walked among them as a youth ;  
Their lips are riper now, in very truth,  
And eyes of far more wonderful bright blue,  
Or the unexampled tender hazel hue  
That filled the liquid glances of my queen ;  
The future differs not from what has been,

But love and sorrow do divide our breath,  
And light us on the lonely march to death.  
O Death, most bountiful ! O Death, most good !  
I wonder, art thou as a green-girt wood,  
Filled with the singing of rejoicing birds,  
And angels eloquent with risen words ?  
Or art thou as some icy hollow cave,  
Or moss-built circle of a sleepy grave ?  
Or art thou as the thunders of the deep  
Wherethrough the sharp-finned monstrous dolphins leap ?  
Or art thou as a soft and budding bank  
Lighted with ruby flowers and grasses rank,  
Whereon two talking lovers may abide  
From happy morning till cool eventide ?

I leave the old meadows, mistress, and I fly  
To some more taciturn and peaceful sky ;  
But yet again the old raptures that I felt  
Do burn me, and throughout me storm and melt,  
And therefore, weeping, with these many words  
I summon up the past—my future girds  
Fresh vigorous loins to adventure novel things,  
And soon I change the measure of my strings.  
The cup o'er which so often I have grieved,  
Which from thine hands I primarily received,

Resolveth now its sacred golden form,  
Like some changed genius in a thunder-storm,  
Into the gilded brackish vase of art,  
Containing no solution for the heart ;  
Love's crystal thus is changed ; my hand receives  
A vessel dank with withered autumn leaves—  
For that sweet vase my lady touched with lips  
Sweeter than any flower the red bee sips.  
O wonderful and delicate perfume !  
That filled the faint recesses of the room  
When, like a gliding ghost, my lady came  
Riding on joyous curve of silvery flame,  
I wonder is there anything so sweet  
In heaven for the dying sense to meet ?  
For surely then my spirit would have fled  
Gladly, to join the harp-strings of the dead ;  
Yea, over the pale river *then* I passed,  
Horsed like a prophet on a whirlwind blast,  
And plucked fair endless blossoms from beside  
Immortal Life's unceasing silver tide,  
Where, seated on that quiet thymy bank,  
She waited for me, 'mid the rushes rank,  
To give the kiss for which in tears I wait  
Now, till I cross the limit of Death's gate.

## LOST VOICES.

My power of voice and song,  
And harp and spirit strong,  
I seized at the sad ending of a day,  
And brought them unto her  
Who, cruel, would confer  
No laurel-leaves, save those with weeping grey,  
And in my rage, I broke,  
As lightning tears an oak,  
The instruments whereon I used to play.

These shall no more resound,  
So said I, nor abound  
With many-coloured, subtle tints of song :  
My flute, and harp, and lyre,  
In sacrificial fire

I place, amid the burnt infernal throng  
Of spirits, whose parched feet  
Do cool that nether heat,  
Who walk the infernal burning haunts among.

The voices that were good,  
By lake, and mount, and wood,  
For ever—yea, for ever now have ceased ;  
The voices that could slake  
The thirst of sea and lake,  
By the broad chants of storm-winds unappeased ;  
The voices that could move  
A listening maid to love,  
Are even as dead spirits just released.

On rapid wings they fly  
Towards a newer distant sky ;  
I shall not hear their tender voices sound  
By river or by marge  
Of ocean blue and large ;  
I shall not hear them rustle o'er the ground,  
As the breezes move in May  
Many a gentle, leafy spray,  
When the songs of yellow-breasted birds abound.

I shall not hear their sighs,  
Nor mark them with mine eyes,  
For all sweet loves and sounds are withered things—  
Like blossoms in a bed  
That once was sweet and red,  
They fold late, tarnished, dismal-coloured wings,  
And it is as if a blast  
Of ice-cold wind had passed  
On the feathers of some frightened bird who sings.

The voices that were great,  
Ere the coming of dark Fate,  
Have vanished 'mid the rushes on Time's bank,  
As a rapid bird doth gleam,  
Through the grasses in a dream,  
Disappearing 'mid their wildernesses rank ;  
To whom have I to turn  
For the vengeance which doth burn  
As a fire within me—whom have I to thank ?

For the passing of the fair  
Gleams of sunny former air,  
And this whistling of a wintry novel breeze ;  
For the changing of the heat,  
And of tender flowers and sweet,

Into glaciers where the shuddering fingers freeze ;  
For the breaking of my harp,  
As by swords inured and sharp,  
As by warriors whom such devastations please

For the shifting of a girl  
Who is supple as each curl  
That her fingers in their frailty move and touch ;  
For the shifting of her heart,  
That is pointed as a dart,  
Being gold-tipped, yet a dangerous thing to clutch;  
For the shifting of her soul,  
That is as an honeyed bowl,  
Yet 'tis poisoned in the bottom over-much.

For these and such-like things,  
Having poisonous subtle stings,  
Who shall answer, who compensate or repay ?  
God ? I say the world is full  
As a miasmatic pool  
Of foul vapours steaming up from life's foul clay,  
And how shall God make sweet  
Such a marshy torrid heat,  
Fiercer e'en than Afric's torridest midday ?

How shall He in the end  
Make such a planet tend  
Towards some glad mysterious haven unforeseen,  
Bringing right harmonious motion  
Out of life's capricious ocean,  
With its ceaseless waves of grey, and black, and green,  
How shall He, with His spear,  
Make the heaven bright and clear,  
And the thunder-clouds and copper skies serene ?

## THE PLANET'S BOAT-SONG.

As I lay beneath the shining of the moon  
On a pleasant night in August, I was 'ware  
Of the surging of our planet and its tune  
As it climbs on brazen pinions through the air,  
And its resonance became a poem soon,  
Which my recollection struggles to declare,  
Gathering up the golden fragments of my swoon,  
In its pristine sweet entirety firm and fair.

"I am climbing," said the planet, "through broad space,  
And I see the oceans beating on their way  
In a blue, tumultuous, never-ending race,  
And I mark the crimson jubilance of day,  
And the corn-fields waving in their golden grace,  
And the monstrous heaped-up thunders, black and grey,  
And the little sons of men, each in his place,  
At their battles, and their labour, and their play.

“ As I fly through tumid oceans of black cloud,  
Like a boat through black, swift, vibratory seas,  
Immersing my vast body in a shroud—  
Like a coffin unbedecked by flowers—of these,  
And the nimbus-cohorts by my keel are ploughed,  
And the copper-coloured squadrons by my knees,  
A sailing chant at my vast lips is loud,  
Ye may mark it, ye may learn it, if ye please.

“ All the neighbouring friendly planets in my song  
I shake hands with, and I greet and recognize,  
Even as arm in arm our clusters stroll along  
The parade-ground and the vistas of the skies,  
Gold-haired Venus, Mars the vehement and strong,  
And the Great Bear, cunning, silver-toothed, and wise ;  
Many others in a swift red-footed throng  
Round the spray of my fast progress gleam and rise.

“ Spinning through this blatant series of gold balls  
I can mark their varied surfaces of life,  
And their various temples, monuments, and halls,  
While I rend the swift air as with edge of knife,  
Nor is there any lover's voice that calls  
To his mistress, or a cannon-shout of strife,  
But its whisper, or its thunderous message, falls  
On my ears, with wondrous drums of hearing rife.

“ I can pierce the purple heather on the hills,  
I can enter crystal palaces of seas,  
And sweet fountains which a sweeter presence fills,  
Even mermaids with their snowy arms and knees,  
I can fathom the deep secrets of deep rills—  
For creation is as open as I please,  
And the general energetic whisper thrills  
All my spirit, as the thyme-scent maddens bees.

“ All the battles and the tumults of the earth  
Are a festival, a proper part of me,  
Yea, a portion of my green surpassing girth,  
And rich feeders of my deep tempestuous sea,  
Bringing roses and anemones to birth,  
And white lilies and such timid things to be,  
And originating red-lipped maidens' mirth  
Out of horror and fierce strokes and agony.

“ What if one man perish ? Truly, *let him fall !*  
Are there not ten thousand others just as good,  
Whom ten thousand girls expect in tower and hall,  
And ten thousand mothers watch on hill and wood—  
Twenty thousand valiant hearts on which to call,  
Where one cowardly soul has withered, having stood  
As a coward upon my brave progressive ball,  
Where each dweller has made progress as he could ?

“ By the underlying attitude of things,  
Which the seekers and the singers dub sublime,  
Every bird by brave necessity hath wings,  
Every mountain-goat strong feet wherewith to climb,  
Every poet talent by the which he sings  
And creative force well fitted unto rhyme,  
Even as I myself disperse the airy rings  
By my pinions to a right melodious time.

“ Let a man be wicked, sinner, if he may—  
He but feeds the stalwart universal plan,  
He but feeds its greatening course from day to day,  
He but feeds it as his cringing spirit can,  
Built of stubble and of pewter-stuff and clay—  
Let a man strive as a hero in the van,  
He but serves the great progression to obey,  
With the spirit and the purpose of a man.

“ Not a soul shall be sufficient to retard  
The great passion of the seasons, as they roll  
Through the wintry barriers, iced and mute and hard,  
Towards fair summer seasons where fair lovers stroll  
Through each forest, and in every city-yard,  
For the wings of Time are excellent and whole,  
And no power of human effort hath debarred  
Their supreme effulgent course, beyond control.

“ From my high, exalted eyrie I look down,  
And I see the blood-stained terror and the sins  
That contaminate each hill and lake and town,  
But I also see the goal the future wins,  
And Earth’s future clear and unpolluted crown;  
When the clearer reign of Excellence begins,  
And things sweet and pure and tender wear renown :  
Towards this consummation every planet spins.

“ When the rivers of the Earth shall run no more  
Fouly mixed with signs of foul decay and mud,  
And the silver waves shall beat on Virtue’s shore,  
And the streams shall not be coloured as with blood,  
And the silver fountains as with human gore,  
But the waters shall be one delicious flood,  
Sweeter, purer, and more crystal than of yore,  
Bearing pearls and precious jewels in the bud.

“ Let a man by power endeavour to withstand  
The necessity that beareth Time’s slow song  
Towards the future, glad, voluptuous, sinless strand,  
And it is as if he strove against the strong  
Waves that slowly eat the slowly sinking land,  
With their billows fierce and iron-tongued and long,  
Climbing onward in a fierce and clamorous band ;  
Even such is the sure overthrow of wrong.”

## CHRIST'S SERMON IN THE CITY.

BENEATH our haze of London smoke  
Christ stood in human garb again,  
Bearing once more the fleshly yoke  
Of sorrow, and of fiery pain,  
And this world's fiery blows that rain  
On strongest rowers, as they strain  
Broad heaving chests at every stroke :

Hurling the world's slow vessel through  
The palpitating seas of Time,  
And sundering the flashing blue,  
In harmony to sweet-voiced rhyme,  
In harmony to Progress' chime,  
Watching her full-mouthed chant sublime,  
Most ancient, yet ever new ;

Hurling the world's slow boat along  
With struggle, and with yearning sobs,  
And eyes that worship Progress' song ;  
Yea, each adoring bosom throbs  
As if a woman sits and robs  
Their spirits, flying like the globes  
That greet the oars, a frantic throng,

After her swift exulting feet—  
So Progress sits within the stern  
Of this world's vessel, and we greet  
Her countenance at every turn,  
And our adoring spirits burn,  
And all our hearts do follow, and yearn  
For pressure of her bosom sweet.

Yea, as we struggle at the oars,  
We meet her with clear yearning eyes,  
And she transfers from moving shores  
Her own to our looks as they rise,  
Even as a lover, rowing, tries  
To catch with some new sweet surprise  
His lady's glance, which veers and soars,

Timid, and steering carefully,  
And glancing fast from side to side,

Dreading the river, or the sea,  
And rude tumultuous boats that ride,  
Having for freight no gold-haired bride,  
Upon the swift alarming tide

That seeks the ocean : so do we

Worship our mistress at the helm,  
And, governed by the sweet grey eyes,  
Dread tempests none that overwhelm  
With sudden shock of white surprise  
Ignoble spirits, as they rise  
From where the westward thunder lies  
In Neptune's black uncertain realm.

And Christ has come to take again  
His share of modern work and toil  
Tempestuous, and his share of pain  
And misery 'neath suns that broil,  
And languid sickly moons that foil  
The lamps that would be filled with oil,  
And ready for the Bridegroom's reign.

He stands within the city, dressed  
In ordinary quiet guise,  
But with a passion unrepressed  
Gleaming from deep-set wells of eyes,

Whence pity and love, triumphant, rise  
And seek with weeping wings the skies—  
Yea, through our city's smoke-fed vest !

He stands within the city's smoke,  
Far more a man, and more a god  
Than when he bore the Hebrews' yoke,  
And scourged the proud men with his rod,  
And comforted with kindly nod  
Sinners whose tears had stained the sod,  
Who wept 'neath alder brown, and oak.

Far more a god than ever when  
His Manhood was denied, and he  
Was separated from the men  
His glorious spirit died to see  
For ever white, and firm, and free,  
Not bending slavish neck, or knee,  
On mountain, or by lake, or glen,

Even to himself exalted high  
And placed upon a special throne,  
Brought nearer to the Father's eye  
Than any follower of his own,  
Brought closer to the heavenly tone  
Of cymbals—further from the moan  
Of earth's perpetual agony.

Further from all the cares of earth,  
Uplifted as a special son  
Of more than ordinary worth  
Towards heaven, and rivalled here by none,  
Though all life's golden threads are spun  
From God's hands, and their tissues run  
Round every cradle and new birth.

Standing within the city's smoke,  
With fiery accent Christ reproves  
His worshippers who place a yoke  
Upon the nations Time removes  
With pitiless fingers from the grooves  
Our shoulders suffer—for he loves  
Truth most of all, as when he spoke

In pinnacled Jerusalem,  
Saying, “The soul that learns of me  
Shall wear the Truth for diadem,  
And Truth shall set his spirit free  
From every slavish misery,  
Nor shall he longer bow the knee  
To any gold tyrannic hem,

“Whether of sin, or fate, or devil—  
For I will shortly free the race

From the red thraldom of things evil,  
Even by the marring of my face  
In that accursed bitter place  
Where, without beauty, without grace,  
With fiends around me in loose revel,

“ I conquer Satan once for all ;  
Let every brave man do the same,  
And step as high in heaven’s fair hall  
As if with Christ’s own feet he came ;  
Yea, let him nourish clearer flame  
Of purity, and heal the lame  
And sickly, and release from thrall

“ The sinner with far surer hand  
Than ever was my own, when I  
Sent lame men leaping through the land,  
And blind men eager now to try  
To pierce with happy gaze the sky,  
Freed from the darkness where they lie,  
An ignorant and hopeless band.

“ I still preserve the metaphors  
With which my first disciples spake,  
Hushing the silver-dripping oars  
To listen, in that lonely lake,

To tales they fashioned for my sake,  
In that they loved me ; but the break  
Of day brings brighter, lovelier stars,

“ And sweet Truth shines upon the hills ;  
Ye see, no longer through a cloud,  
Those ancient Galilean rills,  
And Jesus in his agony bowed  
Like any poor man who has ploughed  
And toiled, or any saint that vowed  
To God the oil with which he fills

“ The vase of his self-sacrifice ;  
At last ye see me as I am,  
No God on mounts of snow and ice,  
No sacrificial sheep or ram,  
With power to save and power to damn,  
In no such guise my spirit came  
To thread the dismal haunts of vice

“ And call the evil therefrom ; rather  
As a pale-browed heroic man,  
A pale self-sacrificing father,  
Or lover, eager if he can,  
To perish in the rose-red van,  
With forehead on a sudden wan,  
If so his dying soul may gather

“ Red bloom of glory for the sweet  
Pale woman looking out for news,  
There where the rocks and water meet  
And mingle browns and greys and blues,  
And the great coasting vessels cruise  
In England—fearing lest she lose,  
Yet worshipping, with woman’s heat

“ Of silent passion, as her own  
Her lover’s surely coming glory—  
With some such shout, with some such tone,  
I perished on the gallows gory  
Before my youthful head grew hoary ;  
And, as upon a promontory  
A dying bird is backward blown

“ Into the deep abyss of cliff,  
Yet finds death better than it seems,  
Or as the thin keel of a skiff  
Doth vanish with gold transient gleams,  
Drawn down beneath the ocean-streams,  
And finds a pleasant vale of dreams,  
So Death to me was gracious ; if,

“ My brothers, ye would apprehend  
The Hebrew hero who has swayed

These stormy years from end to end,  
The first thing—cease to be afraid ;  
The second—cease to be delayed  
By priestly fervent cries conveyed  
Along the cars the breezes lend ;

“ And, thirdly, with clear vision enter  
That fragrant universal room  
Whereof each mortal is the centre,  
And yet the very outmost bloom :  
Believe no dreams of broken tomb,  
*I* traversed hell, *I* saw death’s gloom,  
In spite of many a brave inventor !

“ I am risen ; only risen as  
Ye now *must* fail to comprehend ;  
Not with the foot that trode the grass  
In Galilee ; my clear limbs bend  
To earthly airs no longer :—friend,  
Listen to me, and condescend  
To hear the very fact that was :

“ I saw their marvellous fond tales  
With pity, yet with yearning love ;  
They strove to tear aside the veils  
God wears, and watch without a glove

His bright hand lowered from above,  
They inclosed His Spirit in a dove,  
A bird that sickens, throbs, and ails ;

“ They inclosed Himself in human form,  
Yes, brethren, centred even in me,  
And gave their God a body warm,  
And muscles, and a sinewy knee,  
That their slow faithlessness might *see*,  
Not knowing God, not knowing that He  
Is visible in every storm,

“ Riding upon the outspread wings  
Of time, of thunder, and of space,  
Not closed in any fleshly rings,  
But manifested in each place,  
And in each innocent child’s face,  
And every delicate girl’s grace,  
And throat of every bird that sings—

“ And valiant shoulders of a man,  
And inmost tissues of the brain,  
The bravest sword in every van,  
The foremost ’mid the bloody rain,  
And sweetest rhyme in every strain—  
Yet Personal He doth remain,  
Invisible since time began.

“ The perfectly incarnate God  
Is in the perfect coming race  
That shall achieve a kingly rod  
And queenly sceptre in each place ;  
Yea, herein shines the Father’s face,  
And His unspeakable clear grace,  
And their foot sounds upon the sod,

“ As His foot ; but the Hebrew king,  
The past Jehovah, even I,  
Already to my garments cling  
Signs of decay ; I have to die,  
That Man may be exalted high,  
And many a bright bird in the sky  
The praise of his new sceptre sing.

“ Let God and Man be all in all ;  
I perish, yea, I feel again  
Death’s icy pangs throughout me crawl,  
And his moist teeth in every vein ;  
I care not ! so the Race retain  
Sweet Beauty, and their sons remain  
Godlike, immaculate, and tall.

“ But, sweet and fair and foolish friend  
I pray you, cease to worship me,

For in this age my sceptre ends,  
And priests who strove tyrannically  
To set me where I would not be  
Are plunged at last in terror's sea,  
And, with a crash, their God descends.

“ Descends ; as Dagon fell of old  
In that devout<sup>f</sup> dim-lighted hall,  
With rustle of jewels and of gold ;  
Even so the priestly God shall fall  
In their great midmost festival,  
And Man shall be the crown of all,  
And new sweet blossoms shall unfold

“ Their tender grace before his look ;  
Sweet petals, un beheld before,  
Bloom from beside each running brook,  
And delicate grasses from the shore,  
And stalks and leaves unseen of yore,  
That coarser eyes of men ignore,  
Now shine by every curve and crook

“ Of the sweet-shining river of Time,  
As down its gentle progress comes,  
Helped on by many a helpful rhyme,  
Not un beholden too, to drums

And swords, and the perplexèd hums  
Of armies, and the foam and scums  
Of many a yeasty sinful clime ;

“ Bearing upon its bosom all  
The mingled ecstasies of life,  
The wings that soar, the feet that crawl,  
The murderer swaying bloody knife,  
The lover, all his senses rife  
With pleasure—husband too, and wife,  
In tower and cottage, and in hall.

“ Time bears these foaming beads along  
Towards the far-sounding purple sea,  
Till they unite in ocean’s song,  
At last set loose—made clean and free  
From personal impurity,  
Eager at last to join and be  
A sinless and melodious throng.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“ I watch the flowing stream of time,  
From Calvary, across the years,  
And from my pinnacle sublime  
Am cognizant of Death that nears,

But all my individual tears  
And hopes and joys and cries and fears  
Shall sink—Humanity shall climb,

“A Saviour new, towards unshaped stars,  
Achieving heights I never trode,  
Triumphant even in fiercer wars,  
Brought nearer to the heart of God  
And His sweet passionless abode,  
By even a more terrific road,  
And sorrow that more sadly mars

“The forehead of Humanity—  
Whose members are as struggling limbs  
Whereby the body mounts the tree  
Of Progress ; thus the creature climbs,  
Till Death inevitable dims  
Its brightness, and the glazed eye swims,  
And sinews shudder awfully.

“But yet the Race shall rise again,  
As I, its predecessor, rose  
From all the torments and the pain,  
And bruising agony of blows,  
And horror, as of storm-swept snows ;  
Follow, fair race, where Jesus goes—  
Suffer, to laugh—to live, be slain !”

## THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY.

THE Spirit of Beauty sang to me  
    A soft ear-clasping strain,  
Of moons, of suns, and of the sea,  
    Of snow-showers and of rain,  
Of terror, of strife, and agony,  
    Of hearts rent, and of pain.

But thro' the song there ran a sense  
    Of sweet things yet to come,  
Beyond our earthly hearing dense,  
    Of flowers superb with bloom,  
Of the overthrow of every fence,  
    The unfastening of each tomb.

I felt that I could see the whole,  
    No longer as in part

Seeing—the waves aside did roll  
That suffocate the heart  
Of mankind ; as a broken bowl  
Death did asunder start ;

The wine of life flowed fair and free  
From that pale broken glass,  
I heard the thunder of the sea,  
Drowned mariners did pass  
Before my gaze ; they smiled on me  
Like flowers that smile in grass.

So these smiled, thro' the herbage rank  
Of the slowly-yielding deep,  
Slow-climbing from that monstrous tank  
Up black cliffs sheer and steep,  
Leaving behind their bones that stank,  
Bringing only eyes to weep.

I knew them by their eyes that shone  
More bright than heretofore,  
Although their living flesh was gone,  
Left rotting on the shore,  
Yea, piled in putrid heaps and wan  
Where they were slain of yore.

I knew them by their gleaming eyes,  
Still faithfully the same,  
And similar yearning looks that rise,  
And similar bright flame  
Of valour and of enterprise,  
That death had failed to tame.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me  
About their various fate,  
The solemn secret of the sea  
Rang thro' her chant sedate,  
I saw that only Purity  
Doth ope the heavenly gate.

That only Purity can show  
The secrets of all time,  
And God's face in a tender glow,  
Or awful and sublime  
With secrets He alone doth know,  
The history of each clime.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me ;  
I listened to her voice,  
As to the wind in a tall oak-tree  
Bidding the boughs rejoice,  
As to the accents maidenly  
Of one who makes her choice ;

Her final choice that shall not swerve  
For torture, or for death,  
For sorrow, or for sundered nerve,  
Or what an enemy saith,  
Following her love thro' crook and curve  
With worshipful fair breath.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me  
As some such maiden's tone,  
Or as the whisper of the sea  
Towards quiet lovers blown,  
Seeming with broad-extended glee  
To sanctify their own.

As the sweet power of these sweet things  
Sang Beauty to my soul,  
Even now her dulcet whisper clings  
About me—thro' my whole  
Enamoured silent heart it rings,  
As then my heart it stole.

Even as whenever music sounds,  
Tho' *it* was years ago,  
My blood leaps up and throbs and bounds  
As once it used to flow  
At Love's voice—Love's, that smites and wounds  
With many a honeyed blow.

So, at the memory of the song  
That Beauty sang to me,  
I rise up, renovated, strong  
As some fair sapful tree  
That hurls its limbs for boughs along,  
Erect, and fearlessly.

I know that, tho' the windy years  
Make havoc of things frail,  
And joys are followed fast by fears  
Flying with faster sail,  
There comes a time when clouds and tears  
Shall have no more avail.

For so the Spirit of Beauty sang,  
Sounding from rock and tree,  
Such was the prophecy that rang  
With dulcet voice on me,  
Re-echoing from cliffs that hang  
Above the echoing sea.

The Spirit of Beauty gave me hope,  
Renewing fair desire ;  
For me one day shall sweetly ope  
Those purple gates brought nigher,  
Towards which, as towards a palace-cope,  
I struggle and aspire.

The purple gates that lead to life  
Endless, ecstatic, free,—  
This shall I enter when death's knife  
Is gracious unto me,  
Sweet purple gates with voices rife,  
As limes with many a bee,  
  
With many a bee in summer—so,  
Fair watchers at those gates  
Bring tender yearning hearts that glow  
With pity, and hope that mates  
Their pity—weeping for our woe,  
Weeping till this abates.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me,  
I but repeat her song,  
Mixed with the murmur of the sea,  
And waters rolled along,  
And noise of many a murmuring tree,  
And rocks, an echoing throng.

It was as if the mingled voice  
Of many a sweet-voiced maid  
Then sounded, bidding earth rejoice,  
And flowers in every glade  
Spring forth to gladden each one's choice,  
In sunshine or in shade.

I saw the dead begin to move,  
I saw their forms awake  
On mount, in forest, and in grove,  
By many a silent lake,  
Their faces all did shine with love  
So that I did not quake.

Their faces all were sweet to me,  
I recognized my friends,  
Some slain in war, some drowned at sea,  
Or dying as mostly ends  
Frail man ; from under many a tree,  
Whose ghostly arch extends

Above their tombs, they rustled forth,  
But I was not afraid  
Even tho' an ice-blast from the north  
Their ice-cold garb conveyed—  
I knew these souls were souls of worth,  
I should not be betrayed.

Then many more came climbing up,  
Faces I did not know,  
Some whose cold limbs were sent to sup  
On ice-fields and on snow,  
Others who perished by the rope,  
Or by the red fire's glow.

All were alike, for all were glad ;  
They pointed to the lyre  
Of Beauty, and not one was sad ;  
One similar desire  
Pervaded them, one hope they had,  
With one mind they aspire,

Desiring to be strings upon  
The harp which Beauty plays ;  
If over one her white hand shone,  
Sweeping in subtle ways  
His flowing chords, all pain was gone,  
And nought was left but praise.

The Spirit of Beauty sang to me,  
And all these souls did shake  
With love, like leaves upon a tree,  
Or rushes in a brake,  
Or the scales that quiver violently  
Upon a shining snake.

With love they all did tremble ; she  
Swept hand across the chords :  
Ah ! had she done that thing to me,  
Though fingers were as swords,  
For joy I'd perished silently,  
Not even with loving words.

Even as a lover, overmuch  
Enamoured of his queen,  
Awaiteh not her lovely touch  
And all her bosom's sheen,  
But dieth gazing—even such  
Had been my fate, I ween,

Had Beauty further smiled on me,  
And given me gifts to hold,  
Some rose or lily perhaps that she  
Round her bright brow did fold,  
Some jewel loosened carelessly,  
Or trinket wrought of gold.

But, in that Beauty's song was mine,  
She shall herself become,  
With bosom smelling of eglantine,  
And lips of sweet rose-bloom,  
And hands round which white lilies twine,  
Beyond the advancing tomb,

Mine wholly : yea, no more in part,  
But wholly ; more than we  
With straining, feeble, earthly heart  
Can yet attain to see,  
Beyond the power of poet's art  
Is Love as it shall be.

The Spirit of Beauty ends her song,  
    But something better still  
She has given me ; hope ecstatic, strong,  
    That, doing her sweet will,  
I shall not tarry over-long  
    Before kind love shall kill

My body, and bring my spirit near  
    To one that never yet,  
Through seasons cloudy, seasons clear,  
    Since first our long gaze met,  
Have I ceased sweetly to revere,  
    And sadly to regret.

## MAN'S PROTEST.

AGAINST the God who forged despair and thunder,  
I, Man, protest ;  
Who gave us love, and hid his poison under  
Love's snow-white breast ;  
Who gave us life, and cleaves that life in sunder  
When it seemeth him best.

I, Man, the lordly spirit of all things,  
Thus tortured, wail !  
I, Man, the fairest of all tall things  
That walk or fly or sail,  
Gathering the common outcry of all small things,  
With face not pale,

But open and large and as the heaven above me,  
Do protest !

Make common cause with Man, all ye who love me ;  
    To my breast  
Fly, tortured beasts and birds whose pangs do move me ;  
    Therein rest.

Yea, rest, and be at peace from all things evil ;  
    I, Man, have spoken ;  
Fear not the fiery threats of God or devil,  
    Christ hath broken  
The swords with which the fiends were wont to revel—  
    For a token

He hath sent upon me the spirit of Man a power  
    To disturb and to defy  
The God who slew your spirits till this hour  
    With agony,  
And bruised the delicate bloom of many a flower  
    With thunder from his sky.

He hath sent upon me the spirit of Man a glory  
    Unseen before,  
Now that the long past ages find me hoary,  
    And Time's shore  
Lengthens, and all the unceasing human story,  
    I pour

Strength endless, courage undivulged upon you—  
Prosper, for I  
Am mightier than the God that has overthrown you ;  
Against his sky,  
Whence his storm of thunder and rain has blown you,  
I protest, and I cry.

Against a God who tortures human creatures  
Without a purpose fair,  
Who makes and mars, and makes again their features,  
Till they cannot bear  
Their own bestowed intolerable natures,  
Given for a snare.

Against this God, I, Man, with all my fire  
Of spirit, do protest,  
Hurling against him from my trembling lyre,  
And trembling breast,  
The arrows of unutterable desire,  
The sounds of an unspeakable unrest.

## ODE

### ON THE MORNING OF MAN'S NATIVITY.

#### I.

THIS is the morn, and this the happy hour,  
Wherein the soul of Man, enslavèd long,  
Bursts from slow bud to final beauty of flower,  
With all creation for his harp and song ;  
Man, bent, defiled by ages of black wrong,  
At length asserts his sweet supremacy,  
And takes the lingering sceptre of the earth and sea.

#### II.

As one before me sang the happy birth  
Of Christ, and through long years the sweetest sound  
Of Milton's lyre has added tuneful mirth  
To Christmas, heard when blazing logs abound,  
And blue ice stiffens on the imprisoned ground,

So would I strive to give some voice to Him  
Who surely hence shall rule the coming ages dim.

## III.

Help me, no fabled muse, but rather Thou,  
Swift Spirit of the widening universe,  
To accomplish with success my tuneful vow !  
Grant me a reed melodious, and terse,  
And fragrant, for I hymn no fabled curse,  
But rather, from our century's mountain-tops,  
Of pleasure do I sing and progress' holy crops.

## IV.

I prophesy the end of Christ's fair reign,  
I prophesy a fairer, even of Man,  
Who, having suffered the collective pain  
Of Calvary, and groanèd for a span,  
Even since the flood of toilsome life began,  
Is risen—and he sits with sceptre sweet  
At this our river-fountain, where wide ages meet.

## THE HYMN.

### I.

O SACRED head of Man,  
Defiled for a span,  
But risen now, and with new might proceeding  
To unbar the ages' doors,  
And ope the brazen floors  
Wherein the pallid sons of men were bleeding,  
Thine is it surely to undo  
All fetters, and provide the race with armour new.

### II.

For thou, instead of Christ,  
Providing a new tryst  
In the wide world, but in no local garden,-  
Shalt bring upon us great  
Blessings unseen as yet,  
And mysteries of holier life and pardon

Of all the sick ensanguined past,  
Bestowing on us gifts that verily shall last.

## III.

Full many years ago  
He sang of blood and snow,  
This poet whom I strive to imitate—  
    He sang of Christ and tears,  
    And sorrow of bruised years,  
And famished sinners thundering at the gate

Of an exclusive, narrow heaven—  
*I* lead the sinner therein though his crimes be seven.

## IV.

I am the clear-voiced bard  
Whom no crimes may retard,  
Nor any folly, nor cruelty, nor sin,—  
    My heaven is wrought of God  
    Who lays aside his rod,  
And bids each, even the vilest sinner, in ;

For the slow faiths of previous time  
Give place to something greater, holier, more sublime.

## V.

Behold, the new Christ stands  
At the portal of the lands,  
Wreathed not with thorns alone, but also flowers ;  
His face not only shines  
With tears—he also twines  
Around his head the roses of glad hours ;

Behold, he standeth at the gate !  
His name is one with Progress, and with Life, and  
Fate.

## VI.

All life, all knowledge are  
Contained in Man's new star,  
All shapes, all sweet similitudes of bliss,  
With lordly presence he  
Shall stride across the sea,  
And earth and air and all that therein is ;  
  
The fabled sceptre Jesus held  
Descends on sacred Man, by God's design impelled.

## VII.

All scientific gain  
Is Mankind's to retain,—

All secrets of the unfathomable deep,—  
All bounties of the skies  
He searches with his eyes,  
And marks the young stars when their first limbs leap  
With pleasure through the quivering void,  
By God's own tender palm benevolently buoyed.

## VIII.

All novel thoughts of love  
Are Man's, who from above  
Draws down the golden chain of progress sweet,  
For nothing is exempt  
From error, though men dreamt,  
As Milton, of a Christ with blameless feet,

And as the Greeks in older times  
Recorded perfect gods in smooth, immortal rhymes.

## IX.

But let me never swerve,  
Sweet Spirit, but with nerve  
Clear, and with chant of never-ceasing praise,  
Hymn Man, the sacred king,  
Whose crown the ages bring,  
Whose throne of gold the impetuous ages raise,

At whose divine and untired feet  
 All forces of the past, and past religions meet.

## X.

Let me, with harp untired,  
 By passionate craving fired,  
 Resound the great indissoluble name  
 Of Man, the great new God,  
 Swordless, nor helm, nor rod  
 Adding fictitious lustre to his flame,  
 Nor any fancied virgin's womb  
 Bestowing on his flesh inexplicable bloom.

## XI.

O women ! mothers wronged  
 By fancies that belonged  
 To the early Christian undeveloped thought,  
 How long will ye submit  
 By bale-fires to be lit,  
 And into heathen bondage to be brought  
 By men who prophesy extremes,  
 And all foul errors meet and bear fruit in their dreams ?

## XII.

How long will ye disdain  
 Man's simple snow-white reign,

And over him the smiling face of God,  
The Mother of Mankind,  
The Lord of muscle and mind,  
Swaying the swinging planets with his nod,

And all desires of temporal things—  
How long will ye disdain the faith the sweet age brings?

## XIII.

A swordless faith and clear  
As waters when the year  
Brings back the balmy colouring of June,  
As white as evenings when  
The moon upon a fen  
Sheds down the lustre of a silvery swoon,  
  
As sweet as voices of young girls  
Twining among themselves, some brown, some golden  
curls.

## XIV.

A faith as high as Man  
Looms sweetly in the van  
Of Progress, and I sing it as I may ;  
Tall as the tallest oak,  
Whose each successive stroke  
Makes feebler creeds and systems that grow grey ;

Whose each successive sturdy blow  
 Lays many a king and prelate, many a tall tree low.

## XV.

O, faith divine and fair,  
 Now breathing in the air,  
 Now heard amid the topmasts of the trees,  
 For thy sake I would die,  
 O come, sweet, lift me high,  
 Even with thine own most odorous viewless breeze,  
 Above the heads of current things  
 To where the heavenly Love-bird in her freedom sings !

## XVI.

Above Life, Time, and Fate,  
 Towards the heavenly gate  
 Whereby are clustered all those spirits fair,  
 From Jesus unto him  
 Who from our island dim  
 Caught a rapt sight of azure heavenly air,  
 And left our island for its sake,  
 Following that azure sky wherever it might take.

## XVII.

From Jesus to that bard  
 Who fled the ice-blasts hard

Of England, and in azure Italy  
Sang things too sweet to tell,  
Till those swift breakers fell  
Above his head, and hurled his spirit high—

From Christ to Shelley, poets stand  
Like stars beside the gates of heaven's starry land.

## XVIII.

The faith they preached abides,  
Though life's remorseless tides  
Do sink the individuals one and all ;  
The hope they preached remains,  
Emerging from time's stains,  
And bearing wings, whereas it did but crawl,

And every century adds thereto  
Fresh meaning, and a scope magnificently new.

## XIX.

But not the single face  
Of any, though his grace  
Be ample, and his kingly head be fair,  
Shall tarry as a god,  
With autocratic nod,  
Swinging a devious sceptre in earth's air,

But all shall sink, providing way  
For Mankind's rosy sun that ushers in the day.

## XX.

Yea, Christ shall sink, that new,  
Strong Manhood may bedew  
The earth with fragments of divinity :  
And therefore in my psalm  
The Hebrew's divine calm  
I celebrate not, but the struggling knee  
  
Of the collective Man who comes,  
Flushed with the gleam of sabres and the glare of drums.

## XXI.

For through the foaming time  
Man, single and sublime,  
Doth struggle with a scarce-emerging head,  
Yea, through the swords and gongs,  
And red-lipped battle-songs,  
And pale-lipped adjuration of the dead—

He comes, he comes, the infant child,  
Cradled on waves tempestuous, hushed by storm-blasts  
wild !

## XXII.

He comes—no shepherds bring  
Their bounty, all hearts sing  
For joy that he, the Saviour, doth appear,  
And some, a few who said  
The Man-child was not dead,  
When all the cowardly world did quake for fear,  
  
These in the foremost row of saints  
Reap joy so wondrous that the joy-struck spirit faints.

## XXIII.

Return, ye gods of Greece,  
Whom Milton said should cease,  
Return, and add your radiance to the new  
Glory about to be,  
• For we have need of ye,  
We need your gold-haired beauty to bedew  
  
The quivering cradle wherein lies  
The very god ye sought with tears and faint surmise.

## XXIV.

The incarnation true,  
Not worshipped hitherto,

Of God the motionless and viewless whole ;  
 The manifestation fair  
 Of God the Lord of air,  
 And earth, and fire, and all the waves that roll ;  
  
 The perfect limitless delight  
 Of nations, absolute in never-ending might.

## xxv.

Fly; not sweet pagan ghosts,  
 But all ye wandering hosts  
 Of fancies that around the cradle flew  
 Of Christ—miraculous dreams,  
 Let in the morning's beams,  
 Let in the pitiless and searching blue,  
  
 Let in the piercing morning air,  
 Too keen for that past saviour, though his crown be  
 fair !

## xxvi.

And shudder, not ye sprites  
 Pagan, but those whose rites  
 Initiated many a bloody day ;  
 Tremble, thou James and Paul,  
 Your infant-god shall fall,  
 Already doth his infant cheek turn grey ;

He owned the stable for one night,  
But vanishes before the morning's ruddy light.

## XXVII.

The morning comes ! my song  
Must cease its current long,  
The morning-star is watching at the birth  
Of Man, God's complete child ;  
I cease my singing wild,  
For many a voice with far more potent mirth

Waits to attend the Saviour born  
With serviceable reed and a much mellower horn.

\* \* \* \* \*

## XXVIII.

So ended I—the muse  
Said, “Cease not, nor refuse  
To celebrate yet further in sweet words  
The child whose birth is come  
To wake a planet dumb,  
And who for victory already girds

Loins mightier than the Christ's who falls,  
Liked fabled Lucifer, from heaven's sounding halls.

## xxix.

“Forget not to record  
Who perished by the sword,  
And who by tongues of pitiless blood-red flame,  
For the dear sake of him  
Whose clouded face was dim,  
And dim the o'ershadowed purport of his aim,

Till, in these days arising, he  
With mighty sceptre wields a world-wide sovereignty.

## xxx.

“Approach, ye watchers, who  
By night, amid the dew,  
And hopeless clouds of sorrow and despair,  
Watched whether Man might wake,  
And braved death for his sake,  
And all the swords and weltering fires that were—

Approach ; the tomb is empty now,  
Man rises as an eagle o'er a mountain-brow.

## xxxI.

“Man rises : he shall pass  
Triumphant through the grass

And nettles that surround his lowly grave ;

Not angels, who at first

Christ's victory rehearsed,

Shall flutter round the newly-opened cave,

But souls divine, well-vers'd in tears,

Who mark with yearning awe the bright shape that  
appears.

## XXXII.

“ For, though they worshipped long  
With sword and prayer and song,

Yet shall they be astonished in the end,

For Man is greater than

The thought that they began,

And every growing vigorous day shall lend

Fresh vigour to his limbs, and grace

More beautiful shall crown his rapid-ripening face.

## XXXIII.

“ Take, bard, thy pen and sing  
Of this sweet coming thing

When all the lingering meadows shall be green,

For long enough the sound

Of winter without bound,

And dismal cymbals built of ice have been ;

As Christ was born in winter's deep  
 Man shall in gracious summer issue forth from sleep."

## XXXIV.

I heard ; and I resumed  
 My singing just entombed  
 Within the sorry marble of fatigue :  
 I heard ; and took my harp,  
 Whence notes both sweet and sharp  
 I bring forth, mixed in a melodious league :  
 I heard, and gladly do obey,  
 Hymning again Man's advent and his golden sway.

## XXXV.

I glance throughout the world,  
 Where gradually is furled  
 The flag of Christ, victorious before ;  
 I see new martyrs now,  
 With firm unshaken brow,  
 By river and by lake and hill and shore ;  
 Christians, once slain, are slayers, and  
 Their flag is washed in blood and smeared in many a land.

## XXXVI.

Their flag was white before,  
 But now red currents pour

Their sanguine horror over its white folds,  
 For priests, with soul perverse,  
 Have made Christ as a curse,  
 And fifty curses their foul temple holds,

Therefore their flag is rent asunder,  
 And all their faces pale before the coming thunder.

## XXXVII.

The thunder of new things  
 Around, and in us, rings,  
 The heavens are rent, the temple's outer veil  
 Is torn, the thick clouds break,  
 On many a hill and lake,  
 Clear lustrous suns the impurpled past assail ;

The deities of Greece return,  
 Their bright looks reappear from many a tomb and  
 urn.

## XXXVIII.

Their glad looks reappear,  
 For in Man's coming year  
 All truth he recognizes for his own,  
 Whether in Greece 'twas born,  
 Or where at early morn  
 By faint airs the Norwegian pines are blown,

Or where in China's teeming house  
Strange yellow-mantled priests and deities carouse.

## XXXIX.

All foolish fancies fly  
Adown a vaporous sky  
That daily groweth clearer and more clear ;  
Man bends alone to God,  
Not now to any rod  
Of Hebrew, whether gentle or austere,

Not now to any Christ or Paul,  
For all their golden shrines and silver altars fall.

## XL.

Fall, fast as Milton said  
The old gods being dead  
And vanquished were departing from the earth—  
As in his song they wept,  
And cruel ashes crept  
Across the hearths where deities had birth,  
  
So bitter ashes creep amain  
Over the altar-floor where Christ began his reign.

## XLI.

The stable is a stall,  
And nothing more at all,

His Virgin-mother is a woman pale,  
And Christ himself appears,  
As the holier Man-child nears,  
As fiery genius clad in genius-mail—

And all things take their proper form,  
No longer viewed through rifts in superstition's storm.

## XLII.

No trembling shepherds now  
Perform an early vow,  
But, round the cradle of the Saviour, long  
Watchers and guards have been,  
With rapture in their mien,  
And these, instead of that angelic song

Which filled the heavenly stairs let down,  
Bring blossoms of their pain well-suited for his crown.

## XLIII.

With holy tear-stained bloom  
They lingered at his tomb,  
While many coarse surrounding soldiers slept,  
With sacred tear-stained flowers  
They waited, yea, for hours,  
Or round his cradle on soft tip-toe crept;

With joy unstained by tears at last  
They greet him in his freedom, sorrow being past.

## XLIV.

It is not easy now,  
Though I with aching brow  
And aching hand and fiery pen should strive  
To render this sweet tale,  
It is not of avail,  
No power hath any bard who is alive  
  
In fullness of fair words to speak  
The beauty of the rose upon our infant's cheek.

## XLV.

For Christ was but a man,  
But our sweet babe began  
Before the single, separate birth of races ;  
In every woman he  
Is manifest, and she  
Is but as one of his soft feminine faces ;  
  
All beauty of form, and grace superb,  
Is his who rides upon wide life without a curb.

## XLVI.

Our limitless desire  
We worship in the fire  
Of genius, and the beauty of a girl,

We see him manifest  
In every sacred breast  
Of wifehood, and as sacred virgin's curl ;

Confined not to a man or race,  
We worship him revealed as present in each place.

## XLVII.

And, seeing that this thing  
Approaches with slow wing,  
And that it is not manifest as yet,  
Save only to the vision  
Of souls escaped from prison  
Whose longing eyes with love of it are wet,

It is no easy task to say  
Words worthy of the ripe, inevitable day.

## XLVIII.

But Milton's song was based  
On fables undisplaced ;—  
He took his flowers of song from plants that filled  
His country, and behind  
Gleamed stories to his mind,  
Whereby the impetuous struggling soul was stilled ;

But, when an epoch gleams in front,  
Harder indeed it is to bear the tuneful brunt.

## XLIX.

Therefore we wait for some  
Great singer who shall come  
To set the dawning epoch to a tune  
Sublime as Milton's, when  
With power of singers ten  
He set to melody the sinking moon

Of Christendom—but now the sun  
Demands a novel lyre for brilliance begun.

## L.

So, dawning era, take  
My spirit for thy sake  
Faint with the love that finds no words to speak ;  
Destroy me, but bring nigh  
The happy time that I  
Seeing, declare with diction hoarse and weak ;

I love thee ; let some singer give  
My love a fitting voice in verses meet to live.

FROM A POET MILITANT TO MAZZINI  
TRIUMPHANT.

I.

AT last, our brother, thou hast left the land  
    Of trouble and of sorrow and dismay,  
And joined thy harp to the ecstatic band  
    Whose voices and whose glad lyres sing alway  
    In regions where God's presence is as day ;  
The countenance beloved on earth by souls  
    Who fought for hope, for freedom, and the grey  
    And reverend city by which Tiber rolls,  
Now vanishes with tears from earthly lists and scrolls.

II.

Would that I had the notes of Shelley, and  
    The organ-voice of Milton, and his sight  
Nurtured on heavenly visions sweet and grand,

The more so for the absence of the light  
Common, with which the common earth is dight ;  
Would that I had the voices of all singers,  
And all their palms, and robes of lustrous white,  
That I might fit the chant that in me lingers  
To words less weak and frail, with more auspicious fingers !

## III.

Would that I had the reed whose swift point sang  
Of paradise, and heaven's heights, and of hell,  
From which the immortal soul of the era rang ;  
For, truly, things as great are ours to tell,  
With whom in these last ages it is well,  
Yea, things as vast to sing with a sonorous  
And wide-mouthing trump, or softly-cadenced shell—  
The beauty of the mother-age that bore us,  
And many a flaming star borne perilously o'er us.

## IV.

For inspiration is not dead ; it seeks  
The worthy presence of a worthy bard,  
Then with a glorious rose inflames his cheeks ;  
He cometh ; but the slow time doth retard  
His labour, and surrounding ice is hard  
For any, even a trumpet-blast to melt,  
And barriers interpose, not built of card,

And in the midway iron blows are dealt,  
And many iron shocks that singer shall have felt.

## v.

The singer whom we see not, but who stands  
    Most surely at the gateway of the time,  
With risen power upon immaculate hands,  
    And all a sun's fresh brilliance in his rhyme ;  
    Loud as the thunder in its organ-chime,  
Yet soft as the sweet speaking of a girl  
    Fed upon fairy-tales and lore sublime,  
Who laughs, sweet-shaking many a golden curl,  
At dexterous fairy-tales of palaces of pearl.

## vi.

So sweet and yet so strong shall be the diction  
    Of the great singer soon about to be ;  
He shall disdain the haunts of ancient fiction,  
    And ancient iron-armoured revelry,  
    And tales of knights who struggled knee to knee,  
For he shall mark before him in the fighting  
    Of the wide peoples, and the foaming sea  
Of present thought, a subject grand, delighting  
His fiery spirit, all the paler epochs blighting.

## VII.

Casting himself with faith and sweet persuasion  
Into the yeasty channel of our days,  
And seizing each fair opportune occasion,  
He shall achieve as bright a crown of bays,  
With as divine a worship of those sprays,  
As any who in previous epochs drew  
The people with the fervour of their lays ;  
Laurels at these the lavish people threw—  
But his crown shall be filched from heaven's starry blue.

## VIII.

And thou, Mazzini sweet, hast paved the way !  
Saint John thou art to this fair coming bard,  
Singing with blameless heart thy prose-clad lay.  
Him all the icy seasons do retard,  
The spring breathes feebly, and Earth's frost is hard ;  
Our glad inwreathed Redeemer comes not yet,  
Anointed with fresh flowers and spikenard ;  
By no green hill-side may his steps be met,  
His footstep presses not the wandering mignonette.

## IX.

But, our Mazzini, thou hast made the path  
Easier, for where thy lonely soul hath bled,

Pierced either by false friends' or prelates' wrath,  
Soft flowers, impurpled with that living red,  
Along the lonely way a radiance shed,—  
Where thou hast groaned, birds have caught up the note  
And hurl it transformed round about the head  
Of one who, following with swift soul, doth float  
Along the self-same way as in pursuing boat.

## X.

Easier it is for Christ, O great Saint John,  
When comes the approaching Healer of our age,  
To put his healing store of garments on,  
And open out a less tempestuous page  
Of Being ;—thou, interpreter and sage,  
Hast gone before, and all the path is ready,  
And the fierce elements less madly rage,  
And less oppressive is the devious eddy  
Of priestcraft, and the true stand stronger and more  
steady.

## XI.

Therefore we worship with religious awe,  
Mazzini, thy fair spirit, that has past  
The wood-side beyond which man never saw.  
We cannot follow yet ; desire is fast,

Both fleet of foot and wing, but Earth's sad blast  
Has yet to be endured a little season,  
A little longer with faint fluttering mast  
Life's vessel 'mid this elemental treason  
Surges and toils, perhaps for some sufficient reason.

## XII.

But, happy soul, it is not so with thee ;  
Thy strife is ended, and thy banner waves  
Beyond that bitter, foam-encircled sea ;  
Beyond the cold domain of clay and graves,  
Thou art, and all thy spoken message saves,  
Even as the Comforter from Christ was sent  
To comfort those who, hidden in black caves  
And gruesome forests, by fierce anguish rent,  
Held to the blood-stained road by which their Master  
went.

## XIII.

That glorious season doth return to us,  
And, as the first brave Christians did endure  
The rack, the thumb-screw, and the bloody truss,  
With simple hearts that perished for the pure,  
So, in this unreturning age, be sure,  
The thumb-screws and the tortures of sharp words,  
Misunderstanding too that doth obscure

The faces even of friends, and many herds  
Of sufferings strange, await the hero whose hand girds

## XIV.

His loins to run a novel torch-lit race ;  
And, first of these new martyrs, with white brow,  
Sacred Mazzini, in the foremost place,  
With white, immaculate attire, art thou,  
Keeping a sacred and unspotted vow—  
That thou wouldest give thyself to Italy,  
The fairest fruit of many a fragrant bough  
Which now doth seek the freshly opened sky,  
Wherethrough the winds of new and better hope do fly.

## XV.

What shall I say ? What words are built of fire,  
To express the living spirit that I feel ?  
Take me with living blast of strong desire,  
So that, alive, as a dead man might reel,  
Or as the golden-handled stars do wheel  
Their bodies in the midst of flaming heaven,  
I turn sick at the force of that appeal,  
And struggle to escape this fleshy leaven,  
By purple teeth of red, ensanguined terror driven !

## XVI.

I sink, I fail, my speechless voice is dumb—  
As the white moon that wanders from afar,  
Filling the skies with silvery flame and bloom,  
Then sinking with a slow diminished car,  
Made like the lustre of a large faint star,  
Till all the heavens are blue and shine no longer,  
Divided by that gleaming snow-white bar,  
And, lastly, ruddy day is proved the stronger ;  
So do I disappear, a paltry verbiage-monger.

## XVII.

But, none the less, with soft love that is mute  
As woman when she sees her lover near,  
Let me upon my heart's interior flute  
Sing to thee ceaselessly, Mazzini dear,  
Who, when the age was sick and shook for fear,  
With strong hand didst usurp the kingly sway,  
And gavest us sight of summer for a year ;  
But now, with thee, the summer is away,  
And all Time's skies are mournful, overcast and grey.

## XVIII.

Thou art gone where peace and summer are abiding,  
Not, as with us, exceptional good things,

But, where thou art, sweet streams are alway gliding,  
And with sweet voices the rapt woodland rings ;  
With thee the Love-bird in clear freedom sings ;  
There are not any fetters, no, nor sorrow,  
Nor iron eagles with remorseless wings,  
Nor need a man in terror dread to-morrow,  
Each coming day fresh sheen of rose-red hope shall  
borrow.

## XIX.

So is it with thee, but with us the labour  
Of imminent and sad things presses hard,  
But here and there, with scanty stroke of tabour  
Struggles some versatile, ambitious bard  
To advance the epoch that our sins retard,  
As I do struggle—and the wild wind blows  
My numbers, rent like palaces of card,  
Into a dismal place made white with snows,  
And what is pent within no woman-spirit knows.

## XX.

But through the sorrow, brother, thou hast journeyed ;  
Harder than I fight hath thy spirit fought,  
With actual steel lances thou hast tourneyed,  
Into which conflict I have not been brought,  
Yet all the horror of lonely tears and thought

Is not a small thing, is it, brother mine ?  
These present birth-pangs, are they all for nought ?  
Or shall I, at mine own life's ending, twine  
Sweet laurels of glad victory, perfect even as thine ?

## xxi.

This, this we know, that one of us emerges  
With triumph from the terror and the pangs  
Of life, even as a diver from thick surges  
Is risen,—while his iron armour clangs  
Around him, and, complacent, he harangues  
His fellows, telling of the deep mid-ocean,  
And rocky hollows, and of sharks' keen fangs,  
And scarlet sea-flowers in melodious motion,  
Illustrating his search with many a fruitful notion.

## xxii.

So, from the horrors of the trembling deep  
Mazzini rises into heavenly air,  
And regions wherein yet we may not peep,  
But which, we are sure, are exquisitely fair ;  
To risen souls he recounts many a lair  
Of pain and horror in our earth behind,  
So that they stand with horror-stricken hair  
Around him, as with ears half deaf, and blind,  
He emerges from the ocean, resolute of mind.

## XXIII.

Fair risen spirits round him stand ; as many  
Have watched a drowned man convoyed from the deep,  
Who, eager, mark the surgeons, if, perhaps, any  
May rouse him from that temporary sleep,  
And, as with pulse and throb the slow limbs leap  
To life renewed, their joy is so exceeding  
That even hardy mariners do weep—  
So, not without tears doth Mazzini bleeding  
Emerge from life's wild breakers round his body speeding.

## XXIV.

To all the prophets great who went before  
He is united, being perfect now ;  
To Milton, who illumined England's shore  
With light that wandered from his darkened brow  
To illume a wider field ; to all who vow  
Their lives to freedom ; most of all to those  
Who guided through the waters the sweet prow  
Of Italy, sweet vessel yclept the " Rose,"  
Fair as a woman, white as woman's breast of snows.

## XXV.

To Shelley, and to him whom Shelley mourned  
In that most tuneful of all elegies,

Is our Mazzini's snow-white soul returned,  
Even as a lark reseeks the voiceless skies  
From which he fell, with fresh soliloquies ;  
Shelley and Adonais are together ;  
Each to outsing the other softly tries,  
Like throstles vying in uncertain weather,  
Straining the yellow root of every puffed-out feather.

## XXVI.

But most of all to Christ, I see him draw,  
With similar heroic outlook near,  
**I** mark their meeting, but with sacred awe,  
And somewhat in me yet of earthly fear,  
I do retreat from words I may not hear ;  
Not otherwise than as a woman who  
Will not, with brain less ample, interfere  
Seeing her husband holding converse due  
With some large-brainèd friend, but meekly leaves the  
two.

## XXVII.

These prophets speak together of approaching  
Beauty of life, and hope of novel things ;  
Strange subjects and remote disclosures broaching.  
They talk of over-burthened crests of kings,  
And how God's Love-bird in her pleasure sings ;

They talk of new grand unions of the nations,  
And peace the coming blood-red epoch brings,  
And giant arms of grand confederations,  
Hurling aside the church and all her spent damnations.

## XXVIII.

Their faces are too bright for me to see  
Without the cover of a kindly veil  
An angel flings in pity unto me ;  
But none the less they bid my singing hail,  
And greet me, sick with ecstasy and pale,  
As in some feeble sort a fellow-fighter,  
Pierced by the horror of earth's lonely wail ;  
As one who struggles if he may make lighter  
The burthen of the earth, and make her body brighter.

## XXIX.

They speak of poets ; and a vision flits  
Before me of earth's circle of pure bards,  
Who, with impetuous spear-points of sharp wits,  
Do speed the pleasure that slow fate retards ;  
Building with bright, imaginative cards  
The temples of the future, and gilt houses,  
And brilliant markets, and triumphal yards,  
Wherein the Future's gladsome toil carouses ;  
Before my face I see robes, mantles, sceptres, blouses.

## XXX.

The various labour of the future streams,  
In one grand vision clear, before my gaze,  
No longer as the food for idle dreams,  
But radiant with immeasurable blaze  
Of truth ; in delicate, astounding ways,  
The mantle of the future is unfolded.  
I mark each forehead sacred with the bays,  
And every brow by kingly purpose moulded,  
Each heart by sorrow's swords or nails of misery scolded.

## XXXI.

I see the hope of every patriot finished,  
The dream of every sorrowing bard complete ;  
The altar of Earth's prayers is undiminished,  
But each petition, with exalted feet,  
Has sought the inmost chamber-hollows sweet  
Wherein God sits to answer ; He doth spurn  
No single flame of sacrificial heat ;  
He gathers all our words into an urn  
Whence presently our hope shall magnified return.

## XXXII.

God gathers all our hearts into his bosom ;  
They rise like scentless lilies wan and pale ;

He doth return them as the blood-red blossom  
Of some superb rose that might proudly sail  
Upon a woman's breast ; our mingled wail  
Is melody if heard from out the sky,  
Even from behind the Holy Temple's vail,  
Whereto thro' paths of misery we fly,  
Ascending to our homes, God's palaces on high.

## XXXIII.

So much I learned ; but then the Italian vision  
Of joy and beauty on my spirit broke ;  
As the green earth doth bound from winter's prison,  
Spurning with laughter every icy yoke,  
A liberated universe then spoke ;  
I marked the re-united shores of nations ;  
The passion of the re-united folk  
Brought incense and immaculate oblations  
Of fruitful hearts to God as happy protestations.

## XXXIV.

The sounds of prayer were common ; yet no churches  
Usurped the grim protection of a creed ;  
The wings of white prayers fluttered through the birches,  
And pure petitions gambolled in each mead ;  
No longer do our poet-martyrs bleed,

For truth is worshipped, reverenced everywhere.

The Spirit of Truth doth calmly take the lead,  
All hearts are free as freest mountain-air,  
All souls of men are white, made exquisitely fair.

## XXXV.

And, fairest of all lands, I saw thine own,  
Mazzini, rising softly from the waste  
Of many a scattered church and vanquished throne ;  
Like some pure island on the waters placed  
By hands of a creating God in haste  
Thy country gleamed, superb with many towers,  
Grand with the endless city that hath graced  
The avenues of Time, and furnished flowers  
Of beauty to adorn the universe's bowers.

## XXXVI.

At last, Mazzini, thou art understood !  
Thy passion, and thy valour, and thy love.  
Thou art not veiled with any paltry hood ;  
Thy spirit, rich with presence of the Dove  
Of Holiness, is visible above  
The Rome that shall be ; therein thou art praised  
By every free-born poet who doth move  
Numbers majestic with delight ; high raised  
Thou art where once the fires of persecution blazed.

## XXXVII.

We pray thee, help us ; we are puzzled sorely,  
    Hard bound by clanking fetters of the age,  
We struggle, we aspire, succeeding poorly,  
    Down-stricken by the adamantine rage  
        Of elements we know not how to assuage ;  
But thou art treading some soft, flowery mead,  
    Or turning some fresh philosophic page  
        Of heavenly knowledge ;—help our souls in need ;  
Be present as a god to save and intercede.

## XXXVIII

Be present with us ; let thy trusty spirit  
    Visit not only Italy, thine own,  
But do thou, in sweet sympathy, inherit  
    Salt shores by alien, fiercer breezes blown,  
        Inhabited by tribes of hoarser tone ;  
Our England gave thee refuge ; guide us on  
    Through struggle, sorrow, and collective groan ;  
Until our great contentment shall have shone,  
    And we may reach the country whither thou art gone.

## XXXIX.

Our England boasts a noble race of singers,  
    Our England in the time that doth draw near,—

The age that shall be present, tho' it lingers,  
    Making away with every sword and sneer,  
    And doubtful, sick presentiment of fear,  
Shall play a noble part ; her bards shall speak  
    The *spring-tide* message of the worldly year,  
As from some pale, prophetic mountain-peak,  
Upon the which they wait with countenances meek.

## XL.

The *summer* of the planet shall be sounded  
    From Italy—thy land, thy love, thine own ;  
Thy love that soared, exceeded, and abounded,  
    Shall be re-gathered into richer tone  
    When Italy's red, liberal rose is blown,  
For great Italian poets shall arise  
    Even sweeter than the flute of Dante flown  
Towards flowery hollows of celestial skies ;  
    Great prophets of intense, unfathomable eyes.

## XLI.

The spirit of Italy shall find a measure,  
    The summer of the future shall pervade  
The land God granted as a perfect treasure  
    Of sunlight to the lands he set in shade ;  
    By river and by sunny nook and glade

The triumphs of Italia shall be counted,  
Like some white-breasted, flower-engirdled maid,  
Upon the white steed of her freedom mounted,  
She shall be seen ; the fangs of priestcraft shall be  
blunted.

## XLII.

The central God shall speak through many voices,  
Through women, and through young men, or a child;  
When all the fragrant bridal-room rejoices,  
Rich with faint perfumes as of roses piled,  
Or savours of broad meadows undefiled,  
God shall be there ; and every bride shall know it,  
Revealing God's breast in her bosom mild,  
Not needing an inspired high-priest to show it,  
Nor any voice of sage, nor word-revolving poet.

## XLIII.

O grand Mazzini, such a season waits us ;  
I see it dimly, and I strive to sing  
The coming pleasurable time that mates us  
To this divine soul of a lovely thing ;  
Already do the buds of roses cling  
To the sweet casement, all the buds are swelling,  
The fields are laden with the odorous spring,

And, in accordance, I would be foretelling  
Love's spring in numbers sweet most softly upward  
welling.

## XLIV.

The hyacinths will soon bedeck the corners  
Of many a happy and most fragrant wood ;  
Why should the sons of men be perjured mourners,  
When blossoms, rich for many a bridal rood,  
Join happy voices in their solitude ?  
Self-sacrifice provides to human sorrow  
A key, and this was thy perpetual mood,  
And therefore do we softly seek to borrow  
At thy most sacred tomb gifts fitted for the morrow.

## XLV.

We do not wait to see thy body rise,  
As once disciples lingered at a tomb,  
With mournful tear-drops in their down-cast eyes,—  
We do not look to see the perfect bloom  
Of risen Mazzini issue from the gloom,  
As once those Hebrews said that Jesus walked  
From spent hell-fires that struggled to consume,  
In vain, the gentle hands and voice, that talked  
So softly—Satan's sting immeasurably balked !

## XLVI.

We do not look to see our hero enter,  
With visible body, a rent heaven of blue,  
Dividing as an arrow swift the centre  
Of that stupendous azure dome we view,  
Cleaving its sounding hollows through and through  
With dazzling wings of passionate intention,  
And pearly radiance and impurpled hue.  
We spoil not God's pale beauty by invention  
Of richer dyes ; we choose a *white rose* for our mention.

## XLVII.

The cheeks of Death are white ; that pale rose hovers  
Softly upon the features of the dead,  
Softly upon pale women who had lovers,  
Whose cheeks were once thrice kissed to roses red,  
Whose lips with crimson loveliness once bled ;  
Death's white flower covers these with tender petals,  
Above the rich departing crimson shed ;  
And we—we seek not with invention's nettles  
To spoil the eternal peace God's hand eternal settles.

## XLVIII.

God places on the dead his solemn palm,  
As a white, pure, imperishable rose,

Imperishable in a fragrant calm ;  
And we—we strive not madly to unclose  
The petals that his tender hands dispose  
Upon the corpse, august in its new sleep ;  
But over it God's sacred blossom blows,  
And unintelligible tears we weep,  
But not for sorrow, no, for something e'en more deep.

**XLIX.**

For Death is unto us as something deeper,  
More holy than it seemed to men before ;  
The dead man is a voluntary sleeper  
Upon God's breast—we cannot, as of yore,  
A risen, pallid Lazarus implore,  
But rather, with a love too deep for words,  
The quiet dust to quiet dust restore,  
Knowing that our departed labourer girds  
His loins to toil afresh 'mid sinless, happy herds

**L.**

Of God's quick creatures, in some sinless mansion,  
It may be 'mid the measureless white air,  
Or in some vast, ecstatic brain-expansion  
Of all the slow yet wondrous powers that were,  
Tedious to him, yet excellently fair

With due regard to whence he, perhaps, had risen  
As from a dark and mist-clothed valley-lair  
Into a mountain-ether ; from a prison,  
Unto a palace steps each man, from fate to vision.

## LI.

But into higher regions steps the dead :—  
And thither, O our Leader, thou art gone,  
With sacred, unpolluted human head ;  
Beyond Death's mountains a new sun has shone,  
Tipping the previous summits faint and wan  
As with a light insufferably pure :  
O brother, has not some pure-breasted swan  
Of soft Italian loveliness been sure  
At last to heal the soul that nobly did endure.

## LII.

Upon the earth thou wast a lonely man,  
Thou art not, I am certain, lonely now.  
A solitary honour is the van  
Of battle, or of thought ! a lonely brow  
For certain that which doth allegiance vow  
To purposes unfathomed by the frail  
And fickle herd, who understand not how  
One passion, vast, imperishable, pale  
With its most intense life, may garb a man in mail.

## LIII.

Driving him surely from the grassy meadows  
Of daisy-flecked, harp-haunted common life,  
Towards the mute and scentless mountain-shadows :  
    Towards some unsearchable, sequestered strife;  
So that he severs with religious knife  
The bonds that tie him to the common soul,  
    For *his* soul with a secret voice is rife,  
And o'er his spirit secret whispers roll,  
Urging him fiercely on towards many a viewless goal.

## LIV.

But, brother, I am certain that the passion,  
Pent-up, misunderstood, imprisoned long,  
Has mixed, in some celestial, fearless fashion,  
    With the soft music of a woman's song ;  
Thine heart of love was tender, yet most strong,  
But it was wholly given to Italy—  
    Or so it seemed to us—but we were wrong !  
Some personal passion thou shalt surely see,  
Who didst on earth adore, demanding no soft fee.

## LV.

The sacred kiss of Italy, most pleasant,  
Is printed on thy dead, heroic brow,

But with some perfect spirit thou art present,  
Some soft embodiment of Italy, now,  
Who shall reward thee—ah ! we know not how,  
Being with remnants of the body blind ;  
Some woman, the fruition of thy vow,  
Thy purest manhood shall most surely find,  
In whom Italia's self shall, visibly, be kind.

## THE OLD AND THE NEW.

“CHRIST being raised, dieth no more”—  
Henceforth Venus is pale,  
And stripped is her snow-white mail ;  
As a sea-bird’s her faint wail  
Resounds thro’ the mists of the shore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Out of the ashes of Rome  
Rises a new tall dome ;  
The peoples shall make it their home,  
Not wreathed with trophies of war.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Trample the blossoms of Greece,  
Their poets and heroes shall cease,  
But praise we our Lord of Peace,  
The deep-browed king we adore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Watchers that tarried beheld,  
On golden pinions impelled,  
Christ’s figure—death being quelled,  
Quelled was their misery sore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Venus from out of the deep  
Risen is, risen from sleep ;  
Take courage, ye that weep,  
For her face shines over the shore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Out of that Hebrew dead  
Rises a banneret red ;  
The peoples have travailed and bled ;  
Our Mars shall initiate war.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Praise we rather our sages'  
Who inscribed fathomless pages  
For a gift and a light to the ages ;  
*Their* calm-browed strength we adore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Watchers that wait at the grave  
Of our goddess, see plumes wave  
In the mouth of that desolate cave ;  
And their souls are no more sore.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Praise we, in hymn and in song,  
Jesus, his sword-arm strong ;  
Approach we, a jubilant throng,  
Low bending Christ’s altar before. ,

“ Christ being raised dieth no more”—  
The storm of the terror of God  
As lightning leaps on the sod,  
But he guides his lambs with a rod  
Gentle, as ever of yore.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
As a King, as a Monarch, He stands  
On a golden throne ; He disbands  
Past sorrows and sins of the lands,  
Peace, bounty, and love to outpour.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
What is beauty but clay,  
Created but for a day,  
In a feeble, mutable way ?  
Frail oaths their goddess swore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

From the snow-white calm of her breast  
Flies healing for spirits opprest ;  
‘Tis a home, a temple, a nest,  
For nations homeless before.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Gone is the terror that slew,  
And our Lady, alive and new,  
Shines as a bird in the blue,  
Shines, as she glistened of yore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Gleameth upon us the beauty  
Of Venus, our joy and our booty  
Spotless ; hers is our duty,  
And service of praise we outpour.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—

Beauty is endless ; Christ  
With death-worms holds fair tryst ;  
Death’s beetles his body enticed—  
Now, where is that oath which he swore ?

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
He, the Lamb that was killed,  
O'er tribes converted and thrilled  
Shall rule ; Death fled when he willed,  
As a fawn at a lion's roar.

“ Christ being raised dieth no more”—  
Shines the dawn of a year  
Sinless, redemption is near ;  
For seasons hoary and drear,  
Soft summer flames at the door.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Zeus and Hera are white  
With extreme terror and affright ;  
As moons sink swallowed in night,  
They sink ; our Sun doth soar.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Fame is of little account,  
To a lordlier life we mount,  
To a crystal ceaseless fount,  
All worldly yearning is o'er.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Christ as a lamb shall flee  
When his trembling gaze doth see  
Our leopard’s approaching knee ;  
When he hears her full throat roar.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Summer is in the smile  
Of beauty ; their swords do defile  
Our goddess, their leaders beguile  
Our people ; Death treads at the door.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
But for a season He  
With red, vindictive knee,  
Doth triumph violently ;  
For a time his red wings soar.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Sweet are the limbs of a girl,  
Sweet is each golden curl  
Her fingers lazily twirl,  
And bosom her hands pass o’er.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Nymphs and goddesses nude  
Are abolished, broken, subdued ;  
The unseemly shapes they viewed  
We hurl in haste to the floor.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Roses are but for an age  
Thoughtless, we turn Time’s page ;  
Heavenly flowers engage  
Our vision—these Christ wore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Praise we Christ, who is strong,  
And his sword, keen-edged, is long ;  
His heart is as sweet as a song,  
And as soft as a kiss to the core.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Ours are the golden hills  
Of Heaven, and amber rills  
Whose bed no torrent fills,  
And gifts from the heavenly store.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Kissed by the foam-flakes, our  
Immaculate foam-born flower  
Steps, under a foam-bell shower,  
With white foot over the floor.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Nay ! there is many a crown ;  
Fame puts smooth bay-leaves down ;  
The forehead that knows no frown  
Love’s earliest rose-buds wore.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Truth ! their masculine kiss  
Is but as a serpent’s hiss  
By beauty’s sweet-mouthed bliss—  
Her mouth is sweet to the core.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Ours are flowery glades  
Upon earth, and cool, deep shades  
Of beeches, and bright-browed maids—  
All earth’s kindly store.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—  
    He is risen, and Summer, on wings  
    Rose-white, rises and sings ;  
    All good gifts he brings,  
All high hopes to the fore.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—  
    Surely Jehovah is here  
    In this peasant’s figure austere ;  
    To the Lord Judæa is dear,  
And earth’s plains snowy and hoar.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—  
    Listen ! our sages speak  
    With rose-flushed, passionate cheek,  
    Yet are they gentle and meek,  
Christ’s sweet evangelists four.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—  
    Surely we trust in the face  
    Of Jesus ; our hands we place  
    Round the body that, by God’s grace,  
The spotless Virgin bore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

She is risen ! Lady sweet,

Trample with pitiless feet

Our bodies ; but, we entreat,

Bring lovely days to the fore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Beauty is in all places

And persons, and various races ;

Sweet summer her white breast graces,

She crowneth the groves that are hoar.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Beauty's evangelists fair

Are fire, and water, and air,

And this sweet earth ; we are 'ware

Of these, her spirits four.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Safely we trust in thee ;

For meadow, and mountain, and lea,

And blue, dim wastes of the sea,

Thine endless bosom bore.

## *S O N N E T S.*



### **ENGLAND TO ITALY.**

[England's Charge to Italy on sending Keats, her well-loved-son, thither for the restoration of his health, and Italy's answer. Written after reading Wordsworth's sonnet on the departure of Sir Walter Scott for Naples.]

ITALIA ! Sister ! to thy tender charge  
With confidence I give my poet child ;  
Our winds and strenuous waves were all too wild  
For him—his spirit lingers on the marge  
Of icy death—approach, swift-footed barge,  
And bear him o'er the waters undefiled,  
To regions where perpetual Sol has smiled ;  
Let peace be his, and restoration large.

Then let him with a vigorous step re-seek  
The barrier of my iron-girdled shore,  
Sweet-voiced as ever, but no longer weak,—  
Singing from lustier throat than heretofore,—  
With soft Italia's bloom upon his cheek ;  
Be speedy, sail, and smite the furrows, oar !

## ITALY TO ENGLAND.

HE was too fair ! I loved him overmuch.  
Sweet sister, is it altogether ill  
That he no more can feel the wintry chill,  
No more be pierced by sorrow's icy touch ?  
That he has, once for all, escaped the clutch  
Of poverty and loneliness and scorn,  
And that another poet has been born  
Into Elysian fields, made fair with such ?

I laid a tender hand upon his head—  
Alas ! the love and passion in it slew ;  
Now is he numbered with the gifted dead,  
Whose wings divide the unfathomable blue  
Of my bright heaven ;—and their fame is shed  
Upon me in remembrance ever new.

## FROM BLACKHEATH TO GRAVESEND.

Suggested by Wordsworth's Series of Sonnets on the River Duddon.

I JOURNEYED by wild marshes yesterday,  
Where lonely bands of wandering cattle fed,  
With here and there a straw-stack or a shed,  
And all the skies were overhung with grey ;  
It was a dismal region, yet I say  
That many swift and pleasing fancies sped  
Throughout me, nor was rapture wholly dead ;  
No lack of colour poesy can slay.

In that dim waste I seemed to apprehend  
A spirit present, lordly and as fair  
As any whose bright sceptre doth extend  
Thro' viewless avenues of mountain air,  
Or over slopes where clustering birches bend,  
And many a scudding goshawk finds his lair.

2.

Since not in mountain-regions I was born,  
But by the silver bank of gliding Thames,  
Where many an iron steamer duly stems  
The current, somewhat have I of high scorn  
For singers who can only sound their horn  
In lofty regions, where the sun begems  
Cold mountain-tops—whose blazing diadems  
From lustrous scenes of easy thought are torn.

The grandeur of a mountain, who denies?  
Grant *me* the patient insight, heavenly muse,  
To own thy sacred presence 'mid dim skies,  
And low surrounding flats of slime and ooze  
O'er which the wandering love-sick plover flies,  
Tender with uniformity of hues.

3.

O mountain-regions, stately and exalt,  
Am I then false and treacherous to you,  
Your perfectly transparent skies of blue,  
Your grand rock-masses woven of basalt,  
And precipices where the wild birds halt  
With some more daring, giddier flight in view,  
And nooks where birches cluster two and two,  
And verdant sheen of many a mossy vault?

Not so ! but one has sung you whom to attempt  
To rival were a folly—as for me,  
From giddy mountain-eulogies exempt,  
Let me the rather seek the still grey sea,  
And rivers as the river where I dreamt  
But yesterday, my vanished love, of thee.

## 4.

For not the mountains, not the lordly void  
Of untempestuous and ecstatic air  
That finds 'mid those high summits cool and fair  
A resting-place and temple unalloyed,  
Not these allure me—nor, by these decoyed,  
Do I forget, sweet muse, my native lair—  
The home, still more significant, of her  
By whose sweet face my fainting youth was buoyed.

Amid the marshes spreading towards the deep,  
By Woolwich and by Gravesend, with the power  
Of coming ocean-life upon their sleep,  
I still can linger many a happy hour,  
And many a happy silent watch can keep,  
Happier than in a fern-clad mountain bower.

## 5.

The great ships steal along—I muse, I think  
Of wonders that their keels shall soon traverse ;

I mark the mariners our islets nurse,  
Clustered in gazing circles on the brink  
Of pier and shore, watching slow topmasts sink,  
As many a hardy story they rehearse ;  
Waste regions I divide with fancy terse,  
And unintelligible joys I drink.

The spirit of the universe is mine,  
Perhaps most of all in such a quiet scene,  
Where floating logs along the river line  
Give motion to an endless waste serene,  
And here and there black rocking boats combine  
To hint at life that elsewise had not been.

6.

Steal on, slow circles of the eddying river,  
Climb on, swift prows of sharp ascending boats !  
I mark ye, and I mark each straw that floats  
Upon the waves, and sun's red rays that quiver  
Thro' the dense air of afternoon, and shiver  
Across my searching gaze like lustrous motes ;  
Each item of the view my outlook notes,  
From the long hills to flats that ebb for ever.

But now the robe of evening mist descends,  
The river groweth darker, and the tides

Are less apparent, as their outset blends  
With the green shore's remote inclosing sides,  
And with the closing day my spent lyre ends,  
And this faint tune its passionate love provides.

## 7.

But, O ye solemn mountains, loved of him  
Who most of all has stood with accents pure  
Among our recent bards whose songs endure,  
Who now sits 'mid the winged seraphim  
With harp not weary and with eyes not dim,  
And lips no earthly sickness can obscure,  
Sweet mountains, be not wroth with me,—be sure  
With love of ye my looks do oftentimes swim.

But in that I was born in lowly lands,  
And in a lowly region sought my bride,  
These speak to me as no man understands,—  
And, with unearthly mystic power supplied,  
I seem to tread the desolate reach of sands,  
And mark the low waste washing of the tide.

## A B B E Y W O O D.

BRIGHT hill-sides, covered thick with yellow heads  
    Of daffodils—a primrose here and there,  
The subtle smell of spring-time in the air,  
A brimstone-plumaged butterfly who speeds  
On wings ecstatic thro' the shining meads,  
    As if a flying daffodil it were,  
A distant prospect sweet beyond compare,  
Showing the silver Thames amid its reeds.

Such was the scene that met our earnest gaze,  
    O Violet, when we rested on the hill,  
Marking the slow departure of the haze  
    From valley, upland, and meandering rill,  
A prospect whose pure soothing presence stays  
    Within me as a sunny comfort still.

## 2.

I felt the sweet sense of the spring-time steal  
Throughout me, renovating every nerve ;  
I marked the distant river's every curve,  
And the far echo of a church-bell's peal ;  
As we were making our sequestered meal,  
With appetites the forest airs did serve—  
Upon a neighbouring bark with cunning swerve  
A creeper\* climbed and twisted, wheel on wheel.

The silence and the pleasure of the place  
Pervaded us—we could not but be sure  
That here was manifest the perfect grace  
Of Beauty, and her bosom soft and pure,  
And the exceeding grandeur of her face :  
The eyeless, smoke-fed city ceased to allure.

## 3.

But, chiefly, I was startled by a sense  
Of what a wondrous pleasure it would be  
To glide, soft-footed, thro' that grove we see,  
Dividing the fir thickets tall and dense,  
When the bright sun of morning shone intense,  
With perfect-bosomed Love beside of me,  
The early dawn illumining each tree,  
And every leaf and flower and dark grey fence.

\* The bird (*Certhia familiaris*)—not the plant.

I seemed to hear the gentle feet of Love  
Upon the mossy, sun-illumined floors,  
And felt that 'twas a pleasure far above  
The passion of the painted corridors  
Of theatres, to traverse, like a dove,  
Dawn's beauty on those leafy forest-shores.

## B L O O D - D R O P S.

To MY BEAUTY.

Rosy petals, red as blood,  
Towards my lady's sweet abode,  
In a trembling hand I bring—  
Piercing all my heart, I sing.  
Musically, blood-drops fall,  
And I gather.....gather.....all,  
Placing them within a cup,  
That therein my sweet may sup,  
And be so fulfilled of me,  
In a vision verily.  
Gleams of roses, passing red,  
I bestow around her bed,  
Gleams of roses, passing fair,  
Fragrant as with summer air,  
Dipped in crimson, grand attire,  
Face-flushed with poetic fire,

Beautiful from suffering—  
These flowers in my hand I bring;  
Red they are, I know it well,  
Blood-red, as from flaming hell,  
Lurid, awfully intense  
With some inner crimson sense,  
Bright with things I may not speak,  
Lest I pain your tender cheek ;  
Lady, lay your hand on these,  
Lily-fingers, if you please,  
And it may be they shall bloom  
As *white* roses from their tomb  
Of concentrated suffering ;  
As a *glad* bard I shall sing, ..  
And my Book shall no more be  
Blood-drops, of a verity,  
Rather tears of perfect joy,  
*White* flowers gathered from a boy,  
Petals purely white, instead  
Of those awful blossoms red,  
And, for beads of sanguine hue,  
Only sweet tears shed by *you*,  
Trickling from the eyes of green,  
Sweetest colour ever seen ;  
With whose worship I began  
Love that raised me to a man,  
Sacred Love, that since pursued  
Me through many a recreant mood—

Holy Love, that would not let  
My weak, cowardly heart forget—  
Perfect Love, that did redeem  
Life from many a sinful dream—  
Happy Love, that brings me here,  
As of old a suppliant, dear—  
Joyous Love, that draws me back  
To the unforgotten track—  
Faithful Love, that still shall last  
When our mortal years are past,  
When the heavens are clear in view,  
And the heavenly mountains blue  
Gleam upon us—love that ends  
Not, but surely, sweetly, blends  
With the fast-approaching sea  
Of a white eternity.

## P A I N - C H O R D S.

TO BEAUTY.

PAIN-CHORDS sounding from my harp,  
Sometimes bitter, sometimes sharp,  
Sometimes from excess of pain  
Ringing out a worthy strain,  
Sometimes whispering low delight  
As of waters in the night,  
Sometimes burning with the heat  
Of Apollo's midday feet,  
Sometimes tender as the moon  
Floating thro' her nightly swoon—  
Such chords in my hand I bring,  
Piercing all my soul I sing.  
Not to personal Beauty now  
Do I make my songful vow.  
Not to lips of rosy red  
Is my harp's allegiance wed,

Not to any breast of snow  
Do I recount tales of woe,  
Not to any eyes of green  
Sing of sorrows I have seen,  
Rather to the Lord of all  
Coming, at His knees I fall,  
Bringing gifts whence He may choose ;  
Flowers I brought of varied hues  
To my Lady—to the Lord  
Many a sorrow-smitten chord  
I would carry, mixed as well  
With the old familiar swell  
Of Love's music; lay thine hand,  
God of sky, and sea, and land,  
Lay thy holy hand on these,  
Thy pure fingers, if it please,  
And it may be they shall sound  
As songs wherein joys abound,  
And my Book shall no more be  
Pain-chords, of a verity,  
Rather tunes of perfect joy,  
Glad notes chanted from a boy,  
Songs of happy calm instead  
Of those chords to which were we i  
Storms and sick delirious things,  
With black vengeance on their wings,  
Many a terror and discord  
Written with red point of sword,

Many an evil-sounding tune—  
Beauty ! change these sad sounds soon  
Into heavenly hymns of life,  
That, exultant, from this strife  
I may rise—remembering thee ;  
Beauty, who didst ravish me,  
When the first poetic fire  
Swept with fury o'er my lyre--  
Beauty, who would'st never let  
My weak fainting heart forget—  
Passionate Beauty, who didst save  
From a foul, inglorious grave  
My sad genius many times,  
Giving me to life and rhymes  
Once again—God, Saviour, Queen,  
Hear me ! *thou* know'st what I mean.

## MY WHOLE LIFE LONG.

Ah ! sweet, *that* vision lasted but one short summer  
night ;

I dreamed of you, I prayed to you—and then you took  
your flight.

I fancied on the next day I had conquered and was  
strong ;

'Tis not so ! I shall dream of you *my whole life long!*

I have wooed an abstract Goddess, I have bent before  
the feet

Qf art with humbler homage, and have found her foot-  
stool sweet,

But time brings back reality ; for once I did thee wrong,  
Avenged thou art—I dream of thee my whole life long !

In life's wild turmoil mankind (so say they) doth forget  
The eyes that early longing with delicious glances met ;  
I doubt it—when a lull comes, that unforgotten song  
Of Passion rises sweetly, thro' my whole life long !

What do I care for Progress, for Battle, or for Joy ?  
True pleasure hath forsaken me, I sorrow from a boy ;  
One night I seemed to reach you—now sunlit fancies  
throng,  
And you shine in the sunlight my whole life long !

To merge oneself in working is well enough for those  
Who never lost their reasons in smelling at a rose,  
But bitter disappointment is for ever as a prong  
To goad me into thoughts of Thee my whole life long !

“ Come, let it pass,” they say to one ; “ assert the inborn  
power  
Of manhood : why should any man beyond the passing  
hour  
Be moved by woman's beauty ? ” I know not, but the  
gong  
Of vivid memory ceases not—my whole life long !



# POEMS AND SONNETS.

BY GEORGE BARLOW.

*In Three Parts, price 7s. 6d. each. Crown 8vo, cloth.*

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, 74 and 75, Piccadilly. 1871.

## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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An hour of play,  
A life of wrong,

expresses shortly the tale of many a sad heart; and the idea of troubles

Threshing the wheat of one's mind like a flail  
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By the same Author.

## A LIFE'S LOVE.

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